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The Theology of the Reformed Church in its Fundamental Principles

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The Croall Lecture for 1892

The Theology of the Reformed Church in its Fundamental Principles

By the late

William Hastie, D.D.

Professor of Divinity in the University of Glasgow

Edited by

William Fulton, B.D., B.Sc.

Formerly Scholar and Fellow of the University of Glasgow

Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 38 George Street

1904

Ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς. Διὰ τοῦτο πᾶς γραμματεὺς μαθητευθεὶς τῇ βασιλείᾳ τῶν οὐρανῶν ὅμοιός ἐστιν ἀνθρώπῳ οἰκοδεσπότῃ ὅστις ἐκβάλλει ἐκ τοῦ θησαυροῦ αὐτοῦ καινὰ καὶ παλαιά.

St. Matt. xiii. 52.

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PREFATORY NOTE.

THE volume now published consists of a course of six lectures delivered by the late Professor Hastie in the Tron Church of Edinburgh in the spring of 1892. By the delivery of the lectures he fulfilled one indispensable condition of tenure of the Croall Lectureship. The publication of them is, however, an equally indispensable condition, although *the term* of publication is to some extent a matter of arrangement between the lecturer and the members of the Trust. At the time of Dr. Hastie's delivery of his course of lectures he had other literary work either in contemplation or in hand; and his appointment to the Glasgow Chair of Divinity in 1895 led to longer delay of the publication of his Croall Lectures, as he, naturally enough, desired to utilise them for class work and also for a closer and more comprehensive study of the subject of them. In the circumstances Dr. Hastie was kindly allowed by the Croall Trustees, as in

analogous circumstances some other lecturers had been, to take his own time in the publication of his book. For that kindness his many friends may well be cordially grateful to the Croall Trustees.

The work so long looked for is now published, and it is to be hoped that it will be widely and kindly received. No intelligent reader of it can fail to find in its pages much information, eloquently stated, regarding both the history and the characteristics of the Reformed Theology. All who have had any lengthened intimacy with Dr. Hastie cannot but be aware that to endeavour to show the superiority of the Reformed Theology over all other forms of theology, whether Catholic, Lutheran, Anglican, Arminian, or Socinian, etc., must have been to him a most congenial task. He held it to be the only theology with which, to use his own words, "we can face, with hope of complete conquest, all the spiritual dangers and terrors of our time — Atheism, Agnosticism, Materialism, Pantheism, Pessimism, Nihilism; but deep enough and large enough and divine enough, rightly understood, to confront them and do battle with them all in vindication of the Creator, Preserver, and Governor of the World, and of the Justice and Love of the Divine Personality" (*vid. Theology as Science*, p. 98).

The Theology of the Reformed Church had early taken possession of Dr. Hastie's mind and heart, and it absorbed his interest more and more as the years went on. He confessed to have no higher nor other aim in all his theological work than to ascertain, vindicate, and apply anew the fundamental and essential principles which he regarded as those of our National Church. The characteristic Reformed Principle of Predestination was the subject of the very last lecture he gave to his senior class. It is much to be regretted that he did not live to complete the elaborate and comprehensive work which he had in contemplation.

The Rev. W. Fulton, a student and friend of Dr. Hastie, has carefully edited the work now given to the public. He has substituted the form of chapters for that of lectures as the more appropriate; filled up a considerable number of gaps; verified most of the quotations, and given references to the more important. In the quotations from John Knox's works he has retained the modernised spelling found in the MS. In a word, he has done what he could in order that Dr. Hastie's views should be correctly stated in his own words.

The author of this brief preface feels bound in justice to his own convictions to add that

although he fully believes in the Biblical teaching as to predestination, he does not believe in the metaphysical predestinarianism of Augustine, Calvin, or the Synod of Dort.

ROBERT FLINT.

1 Mountjoy Terrace, Musselburgh,
24th May 1904.

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The Theology of the Reformed Church in its Fundamental Principles.

CHAPTER I.

Introductory.

By the Reformed Church is meant that widely distributed branch of Protestantism, distinct from the Lutheran Church, which originated in the Reformation that was inaugurated, independently of Luther's work, in Switzerland by Zwingli and carried on by Calvin and other reformers there; which also took shape in France, in certain parts of Germany, in Hungary, in Holland, and in England; and which is of supreme importance to ourselves as including, through the Reformation of John Knox, our own Scottish Reformed Church and its great and ever-

growing offshoots in America, in our colonies, and elsewhere. The Theology of the Reformed Church, as developed in its various branches, presents a distinct and well-defined type of doctrine, characterised by certain common fundamental principles, and clearly distinguished in all its modifications and forms from the special doctrines of the Roman, the Lutheran, and other Churches. As a system of doctrine it has been authoritatively exhibited in more than thirty public creeds or confessions, and it has been expounded in a vast theological literature, produced by its leading theologians during more than three centuries and a half. It has been made familiar to us by its authoritative symbolical representation in the Westminster Confession of Faith, which was adopted by the Scottish Church in 1647, and afterwards sanctioned as the creed of the Church by the Revolution Settlement of 1690 and by the Act of Security of 1707. It is commonly known under the designation of Calvinism from the greatest scientific exposition of it in the age of the Reformation, although this name is too individual to indicate its universal historical character, and is quite inadequate to embrace the manifoldness and variety of its development. We speak of it rather as the Theology of the Reformed Church as such — a

Church which, unlike the Lutheran Church, has refused to be designated by any human name, however honoured, or to be confined within any one national designation or boundary, and which claims to be more truly catholic than the Roman Church because it is none other than the Church Reformed, now purged of its human corruptions and individual limitation and elevated into the truly catholic universality of the Invisible Church, with immediate divine communion in all its members.

There are many reasons now pressing upon us which make the examination of the theological system of the Reformed Church one of the most urgent tasks in the sphere of theological science. The controversies which are being carried on, both in this country and in America, regarding some of its particular doctrines as formulated in the Westminster Confession, cannot but arrest the attention and command the interest of every earnest student of theology. These keen and anxious discussions may be regarded, notwithstanding their usual accompaniment of passionate controversy, as the most hopeful and encouraging signs of the continued vitality and progress of our doctrinal theology. They not only show that "the ancient spirit is not dead," but hold even in the bosom of the present antagonisms the fertile

conditions of a greater future. In other branches of the Reformed Church there is to be seen a conspicuous increase in the indifference of many of its representatives towards the fundamental doctrines of the system, and a tendency, more or less perceptible, away from its characteristic type of doctrine. This tendency is showing itself in a growing despair of any universal agreement or fruitful progress on the lines of the old formulated doctrines, and in the substitution for them of a few theological commonplaces that have no deeper root than the personal feeling or culture of the individual and the easy acquiescence of the community. This condition, again, has given occasion to the rise among us, and the inflow from foreign — especially Lutheran — sources, of many new theological views or opinions that arrest without satisfying the popular mind, and, indeed, are generally found to be the reflection of crude opinions or tendencies which have been emphatically repudiated by the great Reformed theologians as inconsistent with their fundamental doctrines, and which, having no deepness of earth to grow in, are soon scorched by the fierce heat of criticism, and wither away. Hence there has arisen a large amount of confusion and uncertainty regarding the fundamental ideas of our theology, even in the minds of those who are most in

earnest with theological truth. Moreover, we are experiencing the disturbing and dissolving influence of new theological sciences and studies, such as the modern Biblical Criticism that has been absorbing the energy of most of the recent theological activity, and startling and perplexing conservative students by new views and hypotheses that seemingly threaten the whole foundation upon which the traditional system of doctrine was reared. Such a new science, also, as the Philosophy and Comparative History of Religion has been fascinating many by its promise of brilliant new discovery and the settlement of the old controversies in a seemingly more philosophical and universal way. And more forcible and irresistible still, has been the influence of the new scientific thought which has so largely extended the range of our empirical knowledge of the real world, and has at the same time been training the modern mind to an apparently new view of cosmical order and relations. This scientific habit of thought has latterly taken up the most antagonistic attitude towards the definite supernaturalism of the Reformed Theology, and has been claiming to supersede it by developing the scepticism of the eighteenth century into a complete and reasoned system of agnosticism. And even beyond this, and carrying it to its utmost

issue, we have the agony of the despairing pessimism of our time, which, besides denying the reality of an eternal supernatural good, denies even the possibility of a natural or social good, and in view of what are called "the idealistic illusions of the past" advocates in Schopenhauer and Mainländer not only Buddhistic resignation and vacuity but an act of universal suicide, as the only rational issue of all the struggling and suffering and toiling of mankind.

These, but slightly indicated, are some of the reasons which seem most urgently pressing us to re-examine the foundations of our traditional system of theology. And I am aware of no other method likely to achieve any solid result or real success than that of simply turning again upon the system itself, to look it fairly in the face once more, to examine into what gave it birth and such vitality in the past, and to determine whether it does not still contain within it, when dealt with freely and truthfully, the unextinguished germs of indissoluble life. This is indeed the true historical method in theology, by which our age has been slowly winning strength and depth of conviction for itself in other spheres. The system must thus have an opportunity of again authenticating itself as a living force in our faith and life by laying bare the secret of its strength

in the past and quickening its surviving possibilities. In short, we must re-examine it in its fundamental principles and widest range, and see whether our present weakness is not due to our own unfaithfulness and narrowness rather than to imperfection or limitation in the system itself. Especially must we seek for the principle of vital continuity, in the sense that all reality in the spiritual sphere is conditioned by a progressive apprehension and evolution of essential and fundamental truth. The glory of the Reformed Theology in the past lay undoubtedly in its doctrine of God; and it is now becoming very clear that all the scepticism, agnosticism, positivism, and pessimism of the time, with which contemporary philosophy, and even speculative theism, are battling so largely in vain, will be checked and overcome only by a new and living realisation of the self-manifestation and self-revelation of God in a form as direct, intense, and universal as that in which it has been expounded in the Theology of the Reformed Church, and kept alive as a sacred fire in the hearts of its members. Our strength in entering upon the investigation before us lies indeed in the fact that the Reformed faith is still real and living among us; and if theological science is to justify and defend that faith, it must be by finding the

source of its continuity in the vitalising conditions which made the past what it was, and which make the transmitted faith of the past our greatest and surest spiritual possession still.

At the outset be it said, that no student of the history of theology, however catholic his sympathies, however complete his philosophic culture, or however large his intellectual aspirations, need be ashamed to own allegiance to the Theology of the Reformed Church, to live in the spirit of its faith, or to work in its service. It was undoubtedly the profoundest theological expression of the new religious life of humanity that was quickened and unfolded into being by the great creative impulse of the modern world, the Reformation. For two centuries and more it moved in the van of all new theological thought. It led the way in biblical criticism and exegesis; it introduced distincter ethical reflection into theology, and it systematised the theological thinking of Protestant Europe on the lines of modern science. It has not only embodied the deepest modern thought about God and divine things, but has conditioned the profoundest philosophy in metaphysics and ethics. It was only in the nineteenth century that it could be fairly said to have been in any measure eclipsed, or in any way oustripped, by the Lutheran Theo-

logy. But when accurately examined, the best elements in the new Lutheran Theology are found to have been really of Reformed origin. It is now generally admitted that it was to the influence of Schleiermacher that the revival of the German Theology in the nineteenth century mainly owed the new vital impulse that has worked most creatively in it, and that what was best and most creative in Schleiermacher was largely, if not wholly, derived from the theological influence of the Reformed Church, in which he was reared. Even the magnificent conception of theology unfolded with such marvellous dialectical strength by Hegel, and carried out in the speculative theology of his school, was at the highest a formal, philosophical reflection of the Reformed conception, and was, therefore, in its best endeavour really alien to the narrow basis and the anti-rational character of the old Lutheran system.

Taken as a whole, the issue of the recent German development is in many respects disappointing. The canker of mere destructive criticism has gradually eaten out its higher vital faith. From sheer terror of the growing strength of scientific thought, the speculative method has been now almost entirely abandoned in Germany on account of the unregulated excesses and the negative positions to which it led. And although

Confessional Lutheranism still flourishes and is expounded with great learning and earnestness, its form is largely alienated from the new intellectual and social tendencies of the time.

The most living theological school in Germany at the present hour is that of Ritschl, which now dominates almost all the German universities. And notwithstanding the indignant repudiation of confessional theologians like Luthardt and Frank, it is undoubtedly the logical outcome of the original Lutheran Theology, which it claims genuinely to represent and to modernise. But while acknowledging the great good that is being done in detail by the Ritschlian school in the department of Biblical, and especially New Testament Theology, and while grateful for its influence in lifting up again the historical Christ before the eyes of bewildered and indifferent Germany and quickening anew the sense of the supreme value of the gospel of the Kingdom of God, I am firmly confident that the Ritschlian system—if system it may be called—can never take with us the place of the old Reformed Theology, nor satisfy our present need. In almost every respect, except in its appreciation of the historical revelation through Jesus Christ, it presents the greatest contrast to the Reformed system, and has no sympathy with it. Its professed object is to

separate theology entirely from philosophy and science and confine it within a special sphere of its own, of the narrowest and most exclusive kind. It founds upon the same antagonism to reason that led Luther to flout and jeer at it as "the beast" and "Mrs. Reason (*Frau Vernunft*), the old storm-raiser," although it gives a certain philosophic dignity to its position by basing it upon Kant's epistemology and theoretical agnosticism. Ritschlianism is admittedly the product of a reaction from the speculative theology that preceded it; and carrying that reaction to an extreme, it exhibits on the whole a falling back on the old Socinian standpoint. Like the Socinians, the Ritschlians deny the natural religious capacity of man; they repudiate all natural theology; they take the same dualistic and mechanical view of the universe and the process of revelation; and they spend their strength mainly in acute criticism and historical dissolution of the whole dogmatic process of the past. The Ritschlian Theology practically plunges the pagan world in utter darkness. It knows no source of religious truth but external historical revelation through the Jesus of the Synoptic Gospels. It reduces the Person of Christ to mere Socinian dimensions, stripping Him of His pre-existence, His resurrection, and His ascension, and summing

Him up in one word as the Revealer of God's Love and Founder of the Kingdom of God. But the love of God is apprehended in so one-sided a way that the cardinal doctrine of the Atonement loses its deeper and wider significance by sin being regarded as all committed in ignorance, and as being, on that utterly untenable ground, immediately forgiven as soon as it is brought into conscious relation to the universal love of God. With an almost ludicrously overdriven hatred of metaphysics and philosophy, which they extrude by a sort of personal violence from the domain of theology, the Ritschlians occupy a glaringly dualistic position towards the whole domain of science, and resolve religion generally into a form of mere subjective utilitarianism, or even, at the hands of Bender—the Feuerbach of the school—into utter hedonism. While they condemn all the old methods of establishing the truth of the Christian revelation, and even all the doctrinal forms in which the Church has attempted to express its contents, they have deliberately cut themselves off from every logical process through which that revelation can be mediated with reason, and consequently they can assert their theological propositions only on the basis of individual impressions and practical valuation. Professing to find a new renovative principle in

Luther's subjective faith, the Ritschlians shut themselves up with it in the narrowest circle. They see in the world of nature, with all its marvellous order and harmony, not a form of the self-manifestation of God's eternal power and Godhead to the universal reason of man, adapted to awaken and develop the germ of the religious life, but a hard system of terrible mechanical forces, from whose relentless antagonism it is the moral function of religion to provide a refuge and escape. Their conception of the divine presence and of the evangelical preparation in the magnificent march of human history is hesitating and uncertain, so that they seldom find a progressive movement or advancing dispensation in the universal order of providence before the one bright solitary star arose and shone over the Roman Judea. In the long, earnest work of Christian thought for so many centuries even their best historians find no pure reproduction or development of the original Christian revelation, but rather its sudden obscuration under pagan skies, the invasion and conquest of the Christian faith by the Greek philosophy, especially by the Logos dreams of Heraclitus and Plato, and an ever falser dogmatised expression of the fundamental truth of Christianity, until at the end, in our day, the whole dogmatic product has to be cast aside

as useless or misleading, and the theological effort begun again entirely anew.

With all that is being ably said for it, such a system has neither the depth, nor height, nor breadth required to satisfy universal science or even the living mind and heart. It certainly falls far short of the biblical presentation of God and the relations of the religious life; and with all the enthusiasm and devotion of its followers and the good work many of them are doing in Biblical and Historical Theology, it has neither the strength nor the stability needed to withstand the mighty currents of the scientific and social forces that are set against it. The new Lutheranism cannot any more than the old take the place of the Reformed Theology, and the last issue of the modern German Theology seems to me only to accentuate more emphatically the pressing need of a revival and renewed cultivation of the distinctive Theology of the Reformed Church.

Taking the whole position of the Reformed Theology into account and guided by the achievements of its ablest representatives in the nineteenth century, we have to deal with a problem that involves at least the following tasks: (1) a return to the sources of the Reformed Theology in the age of the Reformation so as to study them again in view of later developments and

present needs; (2) the logical and historical determination of the fundamental principles of the system as distinguished from the mere formulation of particular doctrines at different times and their accidental imperfections or limitations of expression; and (3) the scientific development of these principles, if such be found possible, in the light of their own history and by the aid of all the theological resources of the time.

For such critical examination and scientific elaboration of the fundamental principles of the Reformed Theology, there has not been much done in a general way, although there has been a good deal done in detail and by way of preparation for it by the theologians of the English-speaking branches of the Reformed Church. Thus we can never forget the great service rendered to Scottish Theology in this department about the beginning of last century by Dr. Thomas M'Crie, the unwearied explorer of the History of the Scottish Reformation, the learned biographer of John Knox and Andrew Melville, and the valiant and victorious defender of our Reformed Theology at the most trying period of its history against the romantic exaggerations and misrepresentations of Sir Walter Scott. Again, the discussions of Principal William Cunningham, which range very largely over the whole

subject, are notable for their sound erudition and thorough command of sources, and are marked everywhere by the touches of a strong, vigorous, and logical mind. But with all his remarkable knowledge and power he lacked the philosophic culture, the progressive spirit, and the living sympathy with contemporary modes of thought which are absolutely necessary not only to reach the old in its real life but to mould its material into new forms. The publication of the Minutes of the Westminster Assembly with the able Preface of its learned editor, Professor Mitchell, together with his Baird Lecture on the Westminster Assembly and other writings, added much fresh and interesting material and gave a new impetus to the study of that branch of the subject. Again, the sketch of the Theology and Theologians of Scotland by Dr. James Walker, and the more recent and fuller sketch by Dr. Adam Milroy, have been of value in setting forth the special merits and services of the Scottish theologians. In America there has been much learned and valuable discussion of the Reformed Theology on almost all its points of detail; and we have two able and comprehensive expositions of the system by Dr. Hodge and Dr. Shedd. But learned and able as these two systematic expositions undoubtedly are, they move entirely

on the old scholastic lines of the seventeenth century; and, while accompanied by an able apologetic, they do little or nothing in the way of developing fundamental principles. To Dr. Schaff, the eminent Church historian, a born Swiss of the Reformed Church, we owe by far the most valuable contribution to the study of the subject in his great work on the Creeds of Christendom—especially in his historical account of the formation and fates of the Protestant creeds, written with that admirable fairness, conscientiousness, and thoroughness of knowledge which characterised all his labours. Finally, a remarkable effort was made by the members of the "Alliance of the Presbyterian Churches" to ascertain and formulate the *consensus* or common doctrines of the Reformed Confessions; but after years of patient toil, in the course of which much material was gathered, the attempt had to be entirely abandoned. It might easily have been foreseen that the mechanical and external method adopted of merely patching together the various related bits of the several Confessions, could not but fail to produce either a new or a living whole.

While the utmost credit must be given to these and similar efforts, it is to other fields and other theologians that we must turn for really instructive work in the line of scientific develop-

ment. It is perhaps not sufficiently recognised that alongside of the wonderful development of the Lutheran Theology, the nineteenth century saw a no less original, vigorous, and effective cultivation on the Continent of the Theology of the Reformed Church. The first impulse towards this movement was given by the master-mind of Schleiermacher, the great renovator of the modern theology, the greatest theologian of the nineteenth century, indeed of the Christian Church, since the days of John Calvin. The efforts, fostered by Schleiermacher, to effect a union between the Lutheran Church and the branches of the Reformed Church in Germany, gave rise to a more careful examination and comparison of the Lutheran and Reformed systems of doctrine and to much instructive discussion of them on both sides. Schleiermacher's own theology as exhibited in his famous work on the Christian Faith, was rooted and grounded in the spirit of the Reformed Church. But it is from his faithful disciple, Alexander Schweizer of Zurich, that there came the ablest, clearest, and most pregnant exposition of the Reformed Theology and its Continental history that had yet appeared. Schneckenburger, another distinguished Swiss theologian, carried the comparison and differentiation of the Lutheran and Reformed systems into all their details, with

unrivalled acuteness and with most instructive surveys. This movement was carried on in Germany by Professor Heppe of Marburg in the mild and conciliatory spirit of Melanchthon, and with an erudition and industry not unworthy of the immortal "preceptor of Germany" himself. Ebrard, with abundant vigour and versatility, but with less originality and insight, helped to give steadiness and caution to the movement. In Holland, where the Reformed Church had created the liberty and greatness of the people, as it did in Scotland, and which from the Synod of Dort to the end of the eighteenth century had been the refuge of the Scottish Church in days of persecution and its best teacher in theological science, another distinguished theologian, Jan Hendrik Scholten, with the characteristic solidity and persistence of his countrymen, followed in the footsteps of Alexander Schweizer, and by his valuable treatise on the Principles of the Theology of the Reformed Church, founded the modern school of Holland, which, notwithstanding its occasional aberrations and excesses, has done and is doing some of the most important and vital work in the theology of our day. In Scotland we possess nothing as yet that can be placed side by side, in quality or merit, with the work of these Continental masters, nothwithstanding abundant

opportunities and resources and the strong stimulus of a vigorous Christian life. But if we are to take our place in the work of reviving and developing the Reformed Theology, and thereby preparing for the larger and nobler Christian life and work of the future, we must learn from them, or at least reckon with them, in our own special efforts.

Any review of the position and requirement among ourselves in the light of what has been already done elsewhere, cannot but point anew to the conclusion that what is chiefly needed at our present stage is the determination and discussion of fundamental principles. The two extremes of the theological position are strongly represented among us and are engaged even now in keen conflict with each other. We have the one extreme of a hard, unchanging, inflexible traditionalism, repeating with strong emphasis and defiance the scholastic dogmatism of the seventeenth century, conceding nothing to the new modes of thought that have risen and grown strong since then, and learning nothing from them. Again, we have the other extreme of a thin and shallow liberalism, which has left behind it the substance and strength of the old dogmatics and makes a parade of a few barren negations, which are dressed up with one or two facile

commonplaces, repeated with endless iteration and compliant adaptation to the popular mood or fashion of the hour. It is almost self-evident that any genuinely scientific theology must move through a sort of mediation between these extremes, if there is to be any ultimate correction or reconciliation or advance upon them. What our Christian life really requires is a new development and application of the spiritual energy and insight that embodied themselves of old in the dogmatic standards; and it is needed in a form consistent and harmonious with the scientific rigour and individual freedom of the new time. It seems most certain, when we look at the new difficulties and perplexities in theology, that nothing could be more fatuous or unhistorical than to lightly cast aside the realised results of the past, or to believe that we are likely to succeed in developing and organising a new Christian life in entire independence of the past. The real task of our Reformed Theology is thus how to secure the old foundations anew and to build upon them a grander and more commodious structure for housing the new religious life and thought. In attempting to fulfil such a task we must indeed be open to all new truth if also conservative of what is old; and we must be scrupulously and severely on our guard against

mere artificial accommodations or renovations, of which the nineteenth century has seen too many in theology, and which by their very nature were certain to give no lasting satisfaction and no real strength. The contribution to the task that is now offered does little more than touch the fringes of the subject. Yet even thus far it is animated by a complete conviction of the harmony of the fundamental principles of the Reformed Theology with the deepest spirit and tendency of modern science; and it is even sustained by a sincere belief that the Theology of the Reformed Church not only is the profoundest system of modern theology, but still contains within it a satisfactory solution of our religious doubts and difficulties and a convincing exhibition of the truth of the Christian salvation. When we have looked into some of its fundamental principles we may perhaps be able to see that not only can it face and join hands with the whole intellectual work of modern science, but its cardinal doctrine of free sovereign grace, so far from being antiquated, is the rational and necessary culmination of all other truth yet known to us about religion.

CHAPTER II.

The Protestant Principle of the Reformed Church stated and authenticated.

The fundamental principles of both the Lutheran and the Reformed systems of theology have been generally reduced in recent discussions to two, namely, the formal principle and the material principle. By the *formal principle* is meant the rule or standard of the Protestant faith or the authoritative scriptural source of our knowledge of Christian doctrine; by the *material principle* is meant the universal doctrine or fundamental thesis which lies at the basis of the dogmatic formulation of the systems. This division of principles has been adopted by Schweizer, Scholten, and most other recent writers; while Baur and Schenkel have reduced them to one principle—the principle of Protestantism in its most general expression. It has been pointed out, however, by Kahnis, Ritschl, and others, that the division into two principles, although

occasionally indicated in some of the older theologians, does not go further back as a logical method than the nineteenth century, having been brought into vogue by Twesten, the successor of Schleiermacher at Berlin; and the examination of any of the systematic discussions referred to clearly shows that only by a somewhat forced construction can the contents of the theological system be arranged under this division. But waiving the question of the possibility of reducing all the principles of the Reformed system to two principles, or even ultimately to one principle, it will conduce to clearness and simplicity if we attempt to follow the historical method and development and take up the principles of the system analytically and progressively as they naturally present themselves. The starting-point obviously is the distinctive Protestant Principle of the Reformed Church.

There is hardly any subject with which we are so familiar about which there prevails so much vague and indefinite thinking as Protestantism. It is indeed only within a comparatively recent period that the great religious movement of the Reformation has been made the subject of accurate analysis and genuine historical study. In particular, the primary division of Protestantism

into two great branches, Lutheran and Reformed, is apt to be forgotten, and the clearly distinguishable characteristics of the branches commonly lost sight of in general indiscriminate descriptions of Protestantism as a whole. The consequence has been that not only have the peculiar responsibilities of the Reformed Church been often overlooked, but the whole character of the Reformed Protestantism as a religious movement in the Church has been often misunderstood. There can now be no doubt that the Reformed Church has a distinctive characteristic Protestant Principle by which it became historically differentiated from the Lutheran Church in the course of their common protestation against the corruptions of the Church of Rome. This principle was the generating factor in its special formation as a Church; it gave a peculiar form to its ecclesiastical organisation; and it has constituted at once its *raison d'être* and its claim to be a special historical witness to divine truth. The importance, and even the necessity of eliminating all accidental and external conditions and penetrating to the vital principle of reform which has given the Reformed Church in all its branches its proper historical position, may be best illustrated by reference to some of the popular misunderstandings of the Protestant Principle that have exercised a

disastrous influence upon the ecclesiastical relationships of the Reformed Church and the progress of its theology.

Thus a very common idea as to the principle of Protestantism is that it consists merely in the *right of private judgment* in matters of religion, and especially in reference to the Bible. This, however, is an unhistorical and misleading view, and is quite inadequate to account for the religious phenomena of the Reformation. The right of private judgment was not introduced into the world by Protestantism, nor is it peculiar to the historical development of Protestantism. It is as old as the first independent thinkers of the world; it received most definite expression in Socrates and the Greek philosophers, and in the cultivated sceptics of ancient India and of the Roman Empire; nay, it found representation in its most earnest and deepest forms even in the Old Testament, as in the Books of Job and Ecclesiastes. It was not so rare in the early Christian Church nor among the scholastics of the Middle Ages as is commonly supposed; and it received its characteristic expression again in the sixteenth century, in the humanists and satirists of the Roman Church rather than in the devout and practical founders of the Reformation. Moreover, the right of private judgment is seen on analysis

to be not essentially a religious principle at all. It is properly an intellectual principle. It may be used to examine, illustrate, defend, or reject a religious doctrine according to the fundamental religious convictions of its subject; but to resolve the religious movement of Protestantism into this principle and treat that movement as a form merely of intellectual reflection and nothing more, is entirely to misunderstand and misrepresent it.

It is only a more general expression of this view to regard Protestantism as a mere *system of rationalism*, and then to see it as but a process of ecclesiastical destruction working itself away from the religious position altogether into utter scepticism and negation. Many distinguished names have been associated with this view; and it cannot be doubted that it has spread widely during the past two centuries, to the great injury and weakening of the Protestant Church itself. It was the starting-point, for instance, of the Tractarian and Anglo-Catholic movement in the Church of England seventy years ago, which drove John Henry Newman and so many others in sheer intellectual terror and despair out of that Protestantism which they had never fundamentally understood, back into the supine slavery of the Church of Rome. Nothing can be more certain than that the leaders

of the Protestant Reformation repudiated the idea that their work was an application of mere intellect or reason to the reform of the Church. Indeed if Luther made a greater error than another, it was in carrying his repudiation of the rational principle too far. In this regard Zwingli, Calvin, and John Knox, and the Reformed theologians generally, showed themselves much superior to him in recognising the inherent right of reason in the sphere of religion, while nevertheless clearly distinguishing from the rational principle the vital essence of religion and the principle of their own reform. It was in the Italian freethinkers and in the Socinians, not in the reformers, that the age of the Reformation found its rationalists. In fact, rationalism has never been met or confuted on more solid and relevant grounds than those maintained by the theologians of the Reformed Church. As an historical phenomenon, even the rationalism of the eighteenth century was a reaction from the intellectual narrowness and obscurantism of Lutheranism, and found neither justification nor scope in the large intellectual illumination of the Reformed Church. It is only where the Reformed Protestantism has been understood as the product of an essentially religious principle germinating and expanding in a free atmosphere of light, that its real significance

and power have been felt and appropriated; and wherever this has been done, as in the thoroughgoing branches of the Reformed Church, relapses into Romanism have been comparatively rare.

Again, it is held that the principle of Protestantism is *subjectivity in religion*, or the exercise of mere individual feeling and consciousness in apprehending and realising religious truth. This is a very common view nowadays. It has received its most philosophical expression in the school of Hegel, from Ferdinand Christian Baur. And undoubtedly it has a certain justification in the subjective character of the Lutheran Theology. But it is no less certain that it is quite unhistorical to regard it as a legitimate expression of the attitude of the Reformed Church towards the Christian Church or divine truth generally. With the founders of the Reformed Church at least, the truth determined the subject, not the subject the truth. The whole attitude of the Reformed consciousness exhibits its subjection to a higher embracing spiritual reality, in very consequence of its emancipation from the usurped authority of a lower external domination. Least of all can it be said that there was anything arbitrary or egoistic or merely subjective in the religion of the Reformed Church. Indeed, with all Baur's

wide sweep of historical vision, and all his profound study of the historical development of the Church as a whole, it is only the result of limited insight into the actual stage in the history of humanity then reached, to describe the age of the Reformation as the epoch or era of subjectivity. There was much subjectivity in religion long before the Reformation, and the mystics of the mediæval Church—not to speak of the dreamy ascetics of the East—were far more subjective than Luther or any of his contemporaries in that age of rapid action. It would indeed be more accurate to take the Middle Ages as the period of subjectivity. As for the modern Protestant world, and especially its Reformed division, it could not have lived and done its work and sustained its faith upon such a shifting and precarious basis. It is nearer the truth to say, it has been characterised by the absence of the subjective element of feeling rather than by its special development. But with all this there is much to warrant Hegel's representation of Luther's position as that of "infinite subjectivity"; and his striking description of the free self-determining spirit of Protestantism as "the flag which we still carry and under which we serve," has in it unquestionable truth. So too his account of the time since the Reformation

as having had nothing else to do but the working of the principle of Protestantism into the modern world as a principle of universal reconciliation with truth and right in the Church and the State, only requires to be freed from its abstract intellectual expression and to be charged with a more concrete religious vitality, to give a really philosophical rendering of the intellectual aspect of the Reformed religion.

In like manner it might be shown that Protestantism is not a mere assertion of the practical reason or conscience as the organ of religion, which is the view of Kant and Schenkel; still less is it the dissolution of the organised Church into the free modern State, as held for instance by so profound a thinker as Rothe; and least of all is it a mere principle of political emancipation or even of social regeneration; for while it is in harmony with all these principles and quickens and works with and through them, it is yet specifically distinct and historically distinguishable from them all.

In fact no theory of the Protestant Principle of either the Lutheran or the Reformed Church can be maintained that does not regard it as a Church-reforming principle exercising its function within the historical development of the Christian Church. The Protestant Principle was

this, and this only, in the original consciousness and endeavour of the founders of the Reformed Theology, and if it has been anything less or other than this anywhere in the history of the Reformed Church, that Church has been in so far unfaithful both to their spirit and example and to its own proper function and mission in the world.

The precise determination and elucidation of the distinctive Protestant Principle of the Reformed Church have been, after a good deal of uncertain tentative groping, carried forward to something like a scientific and final result. Indeed one of the most certain and lasting gains of the modern symbolical and comparative discussions between the Lutheran and Reformed theologians on the Continent has been the clear and definite formulation of genetic principles. It had long been recognised that justification by faith was to be regarded as the distinctive principle only of the Lutheran Church, and that although it had been accepted as a doctrine by the Reformed Church, it was not the cause or explanation of its peculiarities as a Church in relation either to the Roman Church on the one hand or to the Lutheran Church on the other. It was therefore felt necessary, at least from the

middle of the eighteenth century, to search for a differentiating principle peculiar to the Reformed Church in order to explain its specific genesis and characteristics. Various theories were successively advanced; but while they contained much that was real and relevant, they were too vague and general to account for the peculiar vitality of the Christian life manifested in the Reformed Church. It was only towards the middle of last century that a more historical and essential explanation was offered, and it has authenticated itself by being drawn from a consideration of the special circumstances under which the two divisions of the Protestant Church took their rise, and by being applicable to account for the cardinal controversies that have been carried on between them. It was first suggested by Herzog, the distinguished historian and theologian of the Reformed Church at Erlangen; and it was subsequently worked out with his own unrivalled clearness and completeness by Alexander Schweizer of Zurich, who has founded his whole theological system upon it. The principle may be stated in its briefest form as follows. The founders of the Lutheran and Reformed Churches both proceeded in their work of reformation by protesting against the abuses of the Roman Church; but whereas Luther directed his protest

against the theory of righteousness by works as a Judaic corruption of primitive Christianity which gave occasion to the sale of indulgences and kindred abuses, Zwingli directed his protest against the idolatrous practices of the Roman worship and generally against all creature-worship and idolatry as pagan corruptions of the pure primitive Christianity. The Lutheran Church was thus anti-Judaic in its protestation against the corruptions of the Roman Church; the Reformed Church was anti-pagan in its protestation against the same corruptions.

Luther, an Augustinian monk, long harassed by the inward agony and ineffectiveness of the struggle for salvation on the semi-Pelagian basis of merit and good works, came at last to realise the utter futility of the ecclesiastical method; and the abuse of indulgences, expiations, and penances brought him to see the glaring corruptions of the Roman Church and the divergence from apostolical truth of its whole scheme of work-holiness. Hence, when he found peace in the acceptance of Paul's doctrine of justification by faith, he was necessarily drawn into a conflict with the Roman hierarchy similar to that which Paul had to wage against the Judaising party of his time. He directed his protest against the Roman abuses as essentially consisting in a relapse into the Judaic

practice of righteousness by works and, as such, a fundamental corruption of the free saving truth of Christianity. On the other hand, Zwingli at Einsiedeln, girt by the cold severe simplicity of the snow-crowned peaks above, in entire independence of Luther and even in ignorance of the struggle he had entered upon, was roused into active opposition to the abuses of the Roman Church as manifested in the idolatrous worship of the Virgin Mary at that celebrated shrine. His large knowledge of the ancient classical life and literature co-operated with the inner working of his religious spirit, with the result that his struggle with the Roman Church took the form of a clear and emphatic protestation against the idolatry or paganism which then abounded in the worship of the Church, as at once an utter corruption of the primitive Christian truth and a sinful dishonour to the glory of God.

This view has been almost universally received by the theologians of the Reformed Church, and it seems to require only generalisation and expansion to solve the problem. Ferdinand Christian Baur, the founder of the modern Tübingen school of criticism and history, in discussing it from his advanced Lutheran standpoint, has indeed objected that Luther and his associates did also protest against the idolatrous corruption of the

Roman Church, as in their rejection of the dogma of transubstantiation, and that the founders of the Reformed Church protested in their turn against the corruption of the Judaic work-righteousness. So far as the formula is used in an absolutely exclusive sense, this criticism is undoubtedly relevant; for the Reformed Church did most certainly reject, and with no less emphasis than the Lutheran, the semi-Pelagian doctrine of justification by works. But in truth the distinction is to be understood in a relative and not in an absolute sense, as Schweizer himself subsequently showed. Its value and significance do none the less remain. At this point then and until we have reviewed its historical authentication, we may accept the position thus worked out, according to which the distinctive and generating Protestant Principle of the Reformed Church is to be formulated as predominantly a religious protest against the idolatry or paganism of the Roman Church and against all worship of the creature, as a corruption of the religion founded by Jesus and a derogation from the honour and glory due to God alone according to His revealed will.

This principle justifies and explains the peculiar work of reform undertaken and carried out by the leaders of the Reformed movement. Their own sermons and writings from Zwingli's first power-

ful sermon at Einsiedeln against "idolatry and superstition," show how clearly and deeply conscious they were of the anti-pagan principle; and their courageous and unflinching assertion of it in the face of overwhelming power and relentless persecution, proves how deeply they were in earnest in their resolution to realise it. It required no very profound learning, when once the principle was recognised, to discover the fact that the corruptions of the primitive Church in the idolatry of the Mass, the invocation of saints, the veneration of relics, the worship of the Blessed Virgin, and the whole pomp and superstition of creature-worship, had been mainly derived from the pagan spirit and practice of ancient Rome; and Zwingli and Calvin, two of the most learned classical scholars of their age, could not overlook this historical connection, which has been traced and illustrated by recent investigators with the utmost clearness and convincingness in detail. But in maintaining and asserting their principle they took their stand directly upon the revealed Word of God as contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. To turn the edge of this infallible authority the Roman theologians could only appeal to that very tradition and practice which the reformers challenged and repudiated as unauthoritative and corrupt. The

prosecution of the controversy served but to deepen the convictions of the reformers and give fresh stimulus and direction to their work of reform. But while clearly recognising from the outset the corruptions of the Roman Church, they did not intend to repudiate it or separate themselves from it; they aimed at carrying through their reforms in loyalty and submission to it. It was only when inner reform had become impossible by the very strength of the power which had been usurped within the Church by the Pope and his hierarchy that they were compelled to organise the purified Christian life anew on the basis of their new reforming principle. Although driven out of the communion of the Church of Rome, they held it none the less necessary and incumbent that the principle should be maintained until the reformation contended for should be fully accomplished and the separated Christian life reunited in common purity again. It is easy, in these circumstances, to understand the fervid intensity of their protest, their deep hatred of idolatry, their uncompromising condemnation of the Pope and the Roman priesthood as the responsible upholders and practisers of that idolatry, and the determined thoroughness with which they carried out their work of reformation as an absolute duty that could brook neither com-

promise, nor hesitation, nor delay. The Reformed Church in this way became, as is admitted by the Lutheran theologians themselves, the product of the most radical work of reform of the sixteenth century; it became, as Baur has expressed it, the opposite extreme of Romanism; and it has been in its purer branches ever since the most direct, uncompromising, and emphatic antithesis of the whole Roman system. If the original antagonism to all creature-worship and idolatry of whatever kind should ever vanish from the consciousness of the Reformed Church, it would practically lose the right to its historical position among the great divisions of Christendom; and in so far as it might in any of its branches deliberately surrender or fall from its protest, or weaken it by a compromise with idolatrous elements, it would show itself unworthy of its traditions or incapable of really understanding and maintaining them.

Moreover, the Reformed theologians found in the anti-pagan principle a justification of their historical difference from the Lutheran Church and of their independence in the prosecution of the work of reformation. It is well known that the occasion of the first doctrinal controversy between the two Reformation Churches was the dispute as to the real presence of the Body and

Blood of Christ in the Sacrament of the Supper. While Luther repudiated the mediæval dogma of transubstantiation, he yet held that the Body of Christ was present in, with, and under the sensible bread, and was even masticated by the communicant; which theory he expressed in his dogma of consubstantiation. Zwingli, on the other hand, emphatically rejected every form of the doctrine of a bodily presence as inconceivable and even monstrous, regarding the bread and wine in the Supper as always in themselves only bread and wine, yet as symbols too or significant memorials of the broken Body and shed Blood. This was the dividing point between the reformers at the celebrated Colloquy of Marburg in 1529, when Luther proceeded with such unreasonable obstinacy and passion, even refusing to give the right hand of fellowship to Zwingli, who pleaded for it with tears in his eyes, although he could not yield an iota of the principle upon which he stood. To Zwingli and his associates Luther's doctrine of consubstantiation appeared but a weak, confused, and irrational concession to the idolatrous sacrifice of the Mass; and as it was not only contrary to all sound reason but inconsistent with a scientific interpretation of the words of the Institution, any concession to it could

not but arrest the progress of the work of reform.

The Swiss reformers were equally resolute and consistent in dealing with the other point of difference between them and Luther. It was a related point, arising out of Luther's theory of the Lord's Supper, and was connected with his view of the Person of Christ, especially with his conception of the ubiquity of Christ's Body. While they all agreed in rejecting the ancient Christological heresies condemned by the Greek Oecumenical Councils, Luther maintained that there was a complete participation of the divine and human natures in the Person of Christ in all their opposite properties, so that—by what he called the *communicatio idiomatum*—the human nature or humanity of Christ was invested by inseparable communication with all the infinite and omnipotent properties of the divine. Luther went so far as to say that God Himself was the very Subject in Christ's Person; so that God was not merely present in Christ by incarnation, but Christ was even God Himself in the sense that the infinite creator of the world, whom the whole universe cannot contain, lay in the bosom of Mary, who was God's true mother and suckled and cradled and nursed God. Hence, according to Luther, God was crucified, even murdered in

Christ; therefore God died for us and God's Blood was laid in the scales as our ransom. Such views as these may be heard around us every day, not only from untrained evangelists, but from those who suppose themselves to be advanced thinkers in theology. The sober and scriptural sense of the Reformed theologians could not accept any such confused representation of the relation of the divine to the human in the Person of Christ. They rejected it as Eutychianism, as a degradation of the divine, and as a mystical confusion of the infinite with the finite which is never capable under any conditions of taking on infinite attributes. In short, they repudiated the Christology of Luther as virtually identical with the old pagan humanisation of the divine, and as laying again the basis for the old idolatrous worship of the mediæval Church. Hence the care with which they themselves discriminated between the divine and the human in the Person of Christ; so that the Lutherans often accused them of Nestorianism, when they were only advocating a more catholic and rational conception of the Incarnation. They even laid it down as a rule that the human nature of Christ, in His mediatorial Person, was not to be worshipped; and that all prayers or hymns addressed to the humanity of Christ, or to Jesus as the Son of

Mary, were to be carefully rejected from the worship of the Church as idolatrous in themselves or tending to idolatry. This principle was carried out in the severe and simple ritual of the Reformed Church and in its iconoclastic attitude towards ecclesiastical art.

The long and bitter controversies that were carried on between the Lutheran and the Reformed theologians on these topics—as well as later on predestination, the extent of the Atonement, and the application of grace—do no credit to the Lutheran and tell very strongly in favour of the catholicity and toleration of the Reformed theologians. One Lutheran theologian asserted it was better to hold communion with Papists than with Calvinists. Another, in language more forcible than laudable, maintained that "the damned Calvinistic heretics had 99 points in common with the Arians and 666 theses in common with the Turks." Many other instances might be cited in proof of the excesses of the Lutheran polemic. Those who are in the habit of condemning the narrowness and dogmatism of the Calvinistic theologians would do well to turn to the records of these controversies, in which the successors of Zwingli and Calvin are not more distinguished by their genius and learning than by the purity and simplicity of their faith, the rationality of

their methods and contentions, and even the charity and catholicity of their spirit. As Calvin declared in a letter to Zwingli when Luther was hurling his wildest condemnations and invectives at them, that he would still honour the great German "although he should call him a devil," so did the successors of Zwingli and Calvin bear themselves with dignity and forbearance when their most sacred convictions were abused as "the doctrine of devils," and they themselves declared to be beyond the pale of the Christian salvation. Even the Elector Augustus exclaimed that if there was a Calvinistic vein in his body he wished the devil would pluck it out. Yet in face of all this abuse and irrationality the Reformed theologians did not abate a jot of heart or hope, but still steered onward toward more rational issues, even advocating the duty of union as the ultimate ideal. And when after many a conflict and no little disaster the day for union came, it was in the deep spirit of the Reformed Theology that Schleiermacher cherished it and gave it doctrinal form and expression.

It might be interesting to show the parallel between these Continental controversies and the controversy waged between the Puritan party and the high Episcopal party in the Church of

England during the age of the Reformation; but we hasten to glance at the development of the Protestant Principle of the Reformed Church in our own Scottish land. Although the recent Continental Reformed theologians have not dwelt upon it, ignoring us as we have been ignoring them, yet it must already be manifest to everyone who is acquainted with the character and movement of the Scottish Reformation that the principle of protestation against all idolatry in the Christian Church receives most striking illustration and confirmation from the reform carried through in the Church of Scotland.

It seemed at first, however, as if in the providence of God the Scottish Church was to be reformed upon the Lutheran basis. The Lollards of Kyle, in the time of James IV., imbued with and animated by the spirit of Wyclif, the morning star of the Reformation in England, were indeed apparently moving by anticipation on the very lines of the Reformed Church; as we learn from the Thirty-four Articles of accusation against them, among which the first accused them of maintaining "that images are not to be had nor yet to be worshipped"; the second, "that the relics of saints are not to be worshipped"; and the seventh, "that after the consecration in the Mass there remains but bread." But the move-

ment of the Lollards, although widely diffused in the south and west of Scotland, was only preparatory to the independent movement of reform inaugurated at St. Andrews by Patrick Hamilton, Abbot of Fearn, the amiable proto-martyr of the Scottish Reformation, who was burned at St. Andrews in 1528. Patrick Hamilton had studied at Wittenberg, the university centre of the Lutheran Reformation, and there had become the pupil of Luther and Melanchthon and appropriated their doctrine. His little work called "Patrick's Places," meaning his commonplaces or heads of theology, written in Latin, probably at Marburg, and preserved in Frith's early English translation, sets forth Luther's fundamental doctrine of justification by faith in the clearest terms, and elucidates with pointed and pregnant contrasts, after the Lutheran method, the relation between the Law and the Gospel and between faith and works. It shows no trace of the influence of the Swiss reformers. George Wishart, the next great reforming spirit in Scotland, who was burned at St. Andrews in 1546, about twenty years after Patrick Hamilton, formed the transition between Hamilton's Lutheranism and the later position with which the Scottish Reformation became identified. Wishart was condemned for eighteen articles adjudged heretical, and especially

for his thoroughgoing repudiation of transubstantiation and the Mass. He had travelled to Switzerland and studied the Reformed Theology. The only work he is known to have left behind him is his translation of the First Helvetic Confession of 1536 (sometimes called the Second Basle Confession), which gives a clear and concise exposition of the Reformed principles. George Wishart was, by all the accounts we have of him, a man of severe and pure simplicity of character, and latterly of the greatest firmness and resoluteness in the work of reform; and his mantle fell upon the shoulders of his great follower and friend, the man who was raised and trained in the special providence of God to complete the work of reformation in Scotland, to organise the Reformed Scottish Church, and to impress his dauntless faith and heroic spirit upon it for all time—John Knox.

The career and work of John Knox are too well known to require any treatment in detail; but it is important as well as interesting to note how he reached his fundamental conviction, and how resolutely and consistently he applied it. It was not long after he had been sent back to his books and his pupils by George Wishart—then on his way to the scaffold—with the remark that one was sufficient for a sacrifice, that he

appears in the castle of St. Andrews animating and encouraging the heroic pioneers of the work of reform. When he had been unexpectedly called by John Rough and his associates to the work of the ministry, and had accepted the call only after an agony of hesitation and tears, we find him publicly confronting Dean John Annand, the advocate of the papal system, and boldly maintaining that the Roman Church as now corrupted was "the synagogue of Satan" and the Pope "that man of sin." "Yea," he exclaimed, "I offer myself by word or write to prove the Roman Church this day farther degenerate from the purity which was in the days of the Apostles than was the Church of the Jews from the ordinances given by Moses when they consented to the innocent death of Jesus Christ."[1] This, as we are informed, was the burden of all his preaching at that time in the Parish Church of St. Andrews and of all the reforming work he subsequently prosecuted; and such was his boldness throughout that a great German historian has declared that Luther compared with him was "but a timorous boy." When he was chained to the oar on board the French galleys on the Loire, and experiencing cruelties which broke his health

[1] Cf. *Works of John Knox* (edited by David Laing), vol. i. p. 189.

and made him a sufferer for the rest of his life, the same spirit burned in him even more fiercely; so that one day on his tyrant persecutors presenting him with a gaily decked image of the Virgin that he might worship it, with sufficient scorn and contempt he flung the image into the river as but "a pented brod," saying with a touch of the old prophetic irony, "Oor Lady is licht eneuch, let her soom." In 1548, when in prison at Rouen, he analysed and edited Henry Balnave's Treatise on Justification, which shows a Lutheran leaning, and which had been written by his fellow-prisoner for the edification of their friends in Scotland and the promotion of their work. During the period of his English ministry, from 1549 to 1554, he prosecuted his cause with the same unwearied devotion and with increasing vigour and clearness—according to his offer at St. Andrews, "by word and write." Thus the whole literature of the Reformation period can show no more powerful or logical indictment of the idolatry of the Roman Church than the address delivered by Knox at Newcastle on 4th April 1550, which he afterwards published in Scotland under the title, "A Vindication of the Doctrine that the Sacrifice of the Mass is Idolatry." The same principle is laid down in his other writings of this period, namely, "A

godly Letter of Warning or Admonition to the Faithful in London, Newcastle, and Berwick"; "Two comfortable Epistles to his afflicted Brethren in England"; and "A faithful Admonition to the Professors of God's Truth in England," all written in 1554. But John Knox, while arguing with all the unsparing logic of the great Continental reformers against the idolatrous practices of the Roman Church, saw the wider spiritual meaning and application of the anti-pagan principle. He lays down this comprehensive and catholic formula, "that all worshipping, honouring, or service of God invented by the brain of man in the religion of God without His own express commandment is idolatry";[1] and the practical rule that "true faith and the confession of the same necessarily requires that body and soul be clean from idolatry." And he adds with deep significance in his appeal, "it shall nothing excuse you to say, we trust not in idols, for so will every idolater allege; but if either you or they in God's honour do anything contrary to God's Word, you show yourself to put your trust in somewhat else besides God, and so are you idolaters. Mark, brethren, that many maketh an idol of their own wisdom or phantasy; more trusting to that which they think good nor unto

[1] *Op. cit.* iii. 47.

God." The same cardinal principle pervades his remarkable address to the supporters of the Reformation in Scotland, printed at Geneva in 1558 and entitled, "The Appellation of John Knox from the cruel and most unjust Sentence pronounced against him by the false Bishops and Clergy of Scotland with his Supplication and Exhortation to the Nobility, Estates, and Commonality of the same Realm," the whole argument of which is directed against "that most devilish idolatry, the papistical abominations." The same principle continued to animate him during his short ministry with the English congregation at Frankfort in 1554–5, and gave rise to the troubles connected with his condemnation of certain elements in the English Prayer-Book, in consequence of which he severed his connection with the congregation and betook himself to Geneva. Here as one of the ministers of the English congregation and in close association with John Calvin and his colleagues, his training and convictions were ripened for the final effort which was crowned by the public and legal Reformation of the Church in Scotland. Well known to all are the facts connected with his return to Edinburgh in 1559, his reappearance at St. Andrews and preaching again in confirmation of the prophecy he made when he was carried

past the old city in the French galleys, and especially his great sermon at Perth on the 25th June 1559, when he thundered forth the watchword of the Scottish, as it had been of the Swiss Reformation: "Away with Idolatry!" No need to dwell on what immediately followed; how the fury of the people was aroused against the idolatry of the Mass and image-worship, and how the "rascall multitude," as Knox himself calls them, went far beyond his intent or wish in destroying not only the symbols of idolatry, but the very churches in which they were contained. Knox himself has written the History of the Reformation in Scotland down to the year 1566 with a fidelity, animation, and vividness which have been seldom surpassed by any historian; and we read in burning words on every page of this monumental work the vital movement and realisation of the fundamental Protestant Principle of the Reformed Church.

Very important it is to mark that while John Knox was at once the thinking brain, the trumpet tongue, and the directing counsellor of the Reformation, his supporters in the work—the Lords of the Congregation, the Ministers of the Congregation, and the Congregation themselves—were all at one with him on the fundamental principle. Thus it was embodied in "The Petition or Sup-

plication of the Barons, Gentlemen, Burgesses and Others to the Nobility and Estates of Parliament for Reformation of the Church," in which they say, "We cannot cease to crave at your hands the redress of sic enormities. . . . And first, seeing that God of His great mercy by the light of His Word has manifested to no small number of this realm that the doctrine of the Roman Church received by the said clergy and maintained through their tyranny by fire and sword, contained in the self many pestiferous errors whilk cannot but bring damnation to the souls of sic as therewith sal be infected: sic are the doctrine of transubstantiation; of the adoration of Christ His Body under the form of breid as they term it; of the merits of works and justification that they allege comes thereby; togideir with the doctrine of the papistical indulgences, purgatory, pilgrimage, and praying to saints departed; whilk all either repugne to the plain Scriptures or else have no ground of the doctrine of our Maister, Jesus Christ, His Prophets, nor Apostles. We therefore humbly crave of your honours that sic doctrine and idolatry as by God's Word are condemned, so may they be abolished by Act of this present Parliament, and punishment appointed for the transgressors."[1] Then followed those Acts of the Scottish Parliament of

[1] ii. 90.

1560 which abolished the Roman Catholic Church as a legal institution in Scotland, and established the Reformed Church—the old deformed Church reformed—on the doctrinal basis of John Knox's Confession drawn up, on four days' notice, by request of the Parliament as a statement of the doctrines which the reformers maintained. Having ratified this Confession, the Parliament on 24th August passed two Acts, the first abolishing the Mass in Scotland and making its celebration a penal offence, the second abolishing and repudiating the jurisdiction of the Pope in Scotland for all time to come. Hence, whatever may be otherwise alleged or thought, we clearly see that the principle by which the Church was purged and reformed in Scotland, and in accordance with which the new Reformed Church was established by the State, was none other than the Protestant principle of no idolatry, or the self-purification of the Church from its unchristian pagan corruptions, the principle which was enunciated by Zwingli, expounded by Calvin, and asserted and maintained in Scotland by John Knox. The Parliament held that the Roman Church by its idolatrous corruption of the national religion and the consequent abuses and immoralities of which it had been the source in the life of the people, had forfeited its claim to the protection and re-

cognition of the State; and the rights of the Christian Church which it had claimed to exercise were vested in its Protestant successor, which had successfully demonstrated to the State its claim to be recognised as the confessor and administrator of "the true religion."

The Scottish Reformation was so thoroughgoing that it seems to have drawn in 1566 an anxious look from the chief branches of the Reformed Church on the Continent and a serious inquiry as to whether it was in all respects conformable to the common Reformed principles. The fact is so important in its bearings as to merit reproduction from Knox's own record. "The Churches of Geneva, Berne, and Basle," he says, "with other Reformed Churches of Germany and France sent to the whole Church of Scotland the sum of the confession of their faith, desiring to know if they agreed in uniformity of doctrine, alleging that the Church of Scotland was dissonant in some articles from them: Wherefore the Superintendents with a great part of the other most qualified ministers convened in September in St. Andrews, and reading the said letters made answer and sent word again that they agreed in all points with these Churches and differed in nothing from them, albeit in the keeping of some festival days our Church assented not; for only the

Sabbath day was kept in Scotland."[1] The Confession thus submitted to the consideration of the newly established Church of Scotland by the leading branches of the Reformed Church, was the Second Helvetic Confession of 1566, composed by Bullinger and accepted the most widely of all the early Reformed Confessions as the orthodox exposition of the Reformed faith. By the expression of its complete agreement with the doctrines of this Confession, the Church of Scotland showed that it was a genuine branch of the Reformed Church, and it has ever since been recognised as such by all the Continental branches.

And we need not pause to notice in detail how faithful and unbroken has been its tradition through all the changing fates of its eventful history. We see the identity of the principle of its faith through every stage and every trial of its life. What more striking evidence of this can be given than the staunchness of its resistance to prelacy as well as papacy, and to any interruption of its Covenanted work of reformation! What a record is connected with the National Covenant of 1580 (called the Negative Confession of the Kirk of Scotland owing to the emphatic and almost fierce enunciation of its Protestant Principle), from

[1] ii. 534.

its subscription by the king and people till renewed and subscribed again in the Old Greyfriars' Churchyard in 1638 amid scenes of religious fervour and devotion such as have been rarely known in the history of the Christian Church! How sternly did the Scottish Parliament support the work of Protestant reformation by Acts for abolishing monuments of idolatry so late as Charles I., 1641! How the whole terrible anti-prelatic and anti-papistical struggle of the seventeenth century has recorded in deathless tears and martyr blood the tale of the thoroughness of the Scottish Reformation! For all through it was the same fundamental principle that was at stake, the keeping the Church pure and preventing it relapsing into the old pagan idolatries. This was what really lay at the heart of the resistance of the people to prelacy. Their determined maintenance of the Presbyterian government was not merely for its own sake as a divine institution, but as the only safeguard and guarantee of the internal purity and autonomy of the Church. That the popular feeling against Laud's Service Book was no mere local prejudice against a liturgy as such, is clear from the fact that the Scottish Church of those days had a liturgy of its own; and the rough and ready method by which Jenny Geddes disposed of the Service Book on

its presentation in St. Giles' on 23rd July 1637 has been justified by the judgment of deeper theologians on its Romanising elements and tendency. In short, the whole theological literature of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland from Andrew Melville is grounded upon the same Protestant reforming principle. And even the Acts of Parliament since 1560 successively ratifying the establishment of the Kirk or re-establishing it, have overtly done so on the ground of this principle: as the Act 1592 of James VI. ratifying the liberty of the true Kirk and its constitution and abrogating all laws in favour of idolatry, and the Acts of the Revolution Settlement of 1690, and the final Act of 1707 "for securing the Protestant religion and Presbyterian Church government." The Church of Scotland then was thus re-established on the basis of the old Protestant Principle of the Reformed Church, and with only a firmer guarantee of its Presbyterian constitution and government in consequence of its special historical struggles. The principle remains constitutionally unimpaired until this day.

The Protestant Principle of the Reformed movement we have seen to be essentially a Church-reforming principle; and it is all-important to understand the new conception of the Church

which pervaded and crowned the work of all the Reformed theologians. The great Scottish reformer and his coadjutors understood their principle too well to treat it as a merely negative principle, or leave it in any confusion or uncertainty in its ecclesiastical bearing. The essential question of right really was, not the legal power of the State to reappropriate and transfer the endowments held by the Roman Church, but whether the body or community to which they were so far transferred, with the accompanying recognition and protection of the State, was really a Church or no. Conscious that this was the cardinal issue involved in all disputes on particular points and doctrines in their controversy with the Romanists, the reformers were not content with smiting the corrupt system in its most vulnerable part, namely, the idolatry of its central all-determining act of worship, but they proceeded to vindicate their right to represent the Church Catholic in their own sphere, and to reorganise its form and discipline in accordance with the conditions of the new time. The Scottish Confession of 1560 lays down the doctrine of the Church held in common by the theologians of the Reformed Church, with a clearness and definiteness that leave nothing to be desired, and that in the light of the time entirely justified the Scottish

Parliament in the action it took. The most remarkable feature in the Reformed doctrine of the Church as expounded in this Confession showed that the institution which the reformers represented and advocated, while truly spiritual, Christian, pure, and patriotic, was even more catholic and universal than the Roman Church with all its high pretensions. They laid it down that the true Church of which they were members was essentially grounded in an Invisible Church which had existed in the world from the beginning of all true religion, and was coextensive with all true religion. And in so far as this Invisible Church, the true Kingdom of God, the holy communion of saints, became visible, it was distinguishable by certain clear and perfect notes or marks whereby any branch of it could be easily and certainly recognised: namely, first, the true preaching of the Word of God as the highest, divinest truth known to man; secondly, the right administration of the sacraments as the sealing of that truth on the hearts and lives of men; and lastly, ecclesiastical discipline uprightly ministered as God's Word prescribeth, "whereby vice is repressed and virtue nourished." In unsparing terms they declared that these notes or marks were not found in the Roman Church as then existing; while they maintained that as inhabitants

of the realm of Scotland and professors of Christ Jesus they had already churches in their cities, towns, and places reformed according to the said doctrine of the Word of God. Such was the large and comprehensive conception of the Church accepted and advocated by John Knox; and, indeed, it was upon the very idea of the Invisible Church that the leaders of the Reformed Church as a whole took their stand, and did their imperishable work for God and the world.

The idea of the Invisible Church was at once the most original, the most catholic, and the most Christian view of the Kingdom of God which the world had heard of since the days of the Apostles. It was the logical and special offspring of the Protestant Principle of the Reformed Church when it disproved the authoritative and exclusive visible unity of the mediæval ecclesiasticism, and it at once gave room and verge enough for all the emancipated faith and life of the modern world. It is to Zwingli that we owe the first apprehension of it, and Calvin and all the Reformed theologians have recognised and adopted it as the true expression of the Reformed principle. We find it embodied in other Confessions of the Reformed Church besides the Scottish Confession of 1560, although nowhere is it more clearly and distinctly exhibited. We find a faint reflection of it in the

private writings of Luther, but it is contained neither in the Augsburg Confession nor in its Apology. Time has, however, proved the depth and truth of the conception; and it has now become a commonplace of the Lutheran Theology in all its schools, and even been appropriated in modern times by Möhler, the greatest apologist of the Roman system since Bellarmine and Bossuet.

It was only to be expected that such a spiritual conception of the Church would provoke the opposition of the Roman controversialists, and require skilful apologetic elucidation and defence. Among the polemical writings of the Reformed theologians on this subject none shows more skill and judgment than John Knox's forcible reply to the Letter of the Jesuit, James Tyrie, a Scotsman who had gone to France and joined the Jesuits. Tyrie wrote the said letter to his brother, David Tyrie of Drumkilbo, near Perth, whom he was anxious to reclaim from the Reformed faith. The letter was shown to John Knox, who wrote a reply to it point by point. He published his reply[1] several years later, in 1572, when "weary of the world and daily looking for the resolution of" his "earthly tabernacle," as his last address to the faithful of his time, and—as it proved to be—his last legacy to his countrymen. Tyrie begins by

[1] vi. 479 ff.

twitting his brother with the recentness and, as he jestingly puts it, the invisibility of the new Church, referring to it contemptuously as "your invisible Kirk of Scotland, but yet aucht year auld." John Knox replies with his own caustic force and humour that he would pray the writer "to signify unto us why he calleth the Kirk of Scotland invisible, seeing that the ground and the persons inhabitant within the same, are subject to the senses of all those that list to look upon them. Yea, the doctrine taught unto us is so patent that the very enemies themselves are not forbidden to hear and to judge of it. And, finally, the administrations of the sacraments within our kirks are so public that none justly can complain that they are either debarred from hearing or from sight; and therefore howsoever it pleaseth the writer to delight himself in his own vanity, we fear not to affirm that the Kirk of God within Scotland this day is as visible as ever it was in Jerusalem after that Christ Jesus ascended to the heavens, or as that it was in Samaria after that it received the Evangel. Yea, we will further affirm that the true Kirk of Jesus Christ is as visible, yea, and as beautiful in all her proper ornaments this day within the realm of Scotland, as ever she was in Corinth, Galatia, Philippi, yea, or yet in Rome itself, what time that any of the Apostles

ruled them, or that when they were saluted by the Apostle in his Epistles for Kirks." [1] He declares that he and those with him "further affirm that without the society and bosom of the true Kirk (meaning the Invisible Church) never was, is, nor sal be salvation unto man. In thir and like general heids we disagree not from the Papists; but the difference and doubt stands in the specials, to wit, what faith is and what ground it has; what is religion and wherein it differs from superstition and from idolatry; and, finally, what is the true Kirk and how it may be discerned from the synagogue of Satan." [2] And here he turns the argument against the Roman Church on the ground that it has no assurance of salvation by the immediate Word of God; and he fears not to affirm that the Papists having no better ground for their faith than consent of men, decrees of Councils, and antiquity of time, have no faith, but a fond opinion only. He further argues against the Roman idea of the Church Catholic or Universal, and advocates the superior and truer idea of the Invisible Church as the holy and universal communion of saints. "And therefore," he adds, "albeit that we of the realm of Scotland have refused Rome and the tyranny thereof, we think not that we have refused the society of

[1] vi. 494. [2] vi. 486.

Christ's Kirk; but that we are joined with it and daily are fed of our Mother's breasts, because we embrace no other doctrine than that which first flowed forth of Jerusalem, whose citizens by grace we avow ourselves to be."[1] Moreover, when looked at closely, it is the Roman Church and not the Church as now reformed in Scotland that is "new-found" and void of real antiquity; for its idolatrous and corrupt institutions are but late inventions, and have no ground of authority in the evangel of Jesus Christ. "And therefore," he adds with striking subtlety of argument, "whensoever the Papists and we shall come to reckon of the age of our faith, we doubt nothing but that their faith, in more principal points nor one or two, shall be found vera young, and but lately invented in respect of that only true faith which this day in the kirks of Scotland is professed. . . . And therefore we say that our Kirk is no new-found Kirk as the writer blasphemously raileth, but that it is a part of that holy Kirk Universal which is grounded upon the doctrine of the Prophets and Apostles; having the same antiquity that the Kirk of the Apostles has, as concerning doctrine, prayers, administration of sacraments, and all other things requisite to a particular Kirk."[2] And then he rounds off his

[1] vi. 490. [2] vi. 492.

argument, after an emphatic assertion of the right and catholicity of his Church, with a touch of tenderness and hope even for the Church of Rome that shows what profound sympathy under all his anti-idolatrous vehemence yet stirred in his great deep heart: "And yet because that to us it were a thing most grievous so to be excommunicate that we were no Kirk; that is, no parcel of the holy Kirk Universal; we answer for our entries, and say, that before fifteen hundred years our Kirk was in Jerusalem, in Samaria, in Antioch, and wheresoever Christ Jesus was truly preached and His blessed Evangel obediently received, whether it was amongst the Jews or Gentiles. There we say was our Kirk, which is not bound to any one place, but is dispersed upon the face of the whole earth; having one God, one faith, one baptism, and one Lord Jesus, Saviour of all that unfeignedly believe. And so we fear not to receive the title and authority of a particular Kirk, because we have all things by God's Word that thereto appertains. Yea, we are farther bold to affirm that, if ever it shall please God to bring the Kirk of Rome to her original purity, that she shall not be ashamed to embrace and reverence the pure Kirk of Scotland as her dearest sister and next resembling her in all things, before that pride and avarice, joined with idleness and riotous

living, corrupted her ministers, and that the inventions of men were preferred to God's simple truth. We say yet again that whensoever the Kirk of Rome shall be reduced to that estate in the which the Apostles left it, we are assured that she shall vote in our favours against all such as shall deny us to be a Kirk, if God continue us in that simplicity which this day is mocked of the world." [1]

Such is John Knox's conception of the Church Universal, and of the historical Kirk of Scotland in particular, as a visible branch of the truly Catholic and Universal Church as purified from the corruption and error that had mingled with its historical form in mediæval Romanism. It is all the result of the application of the Protestant Principle of the Reformation. Although the Scottish Church in its new form has neither Pope, nor hierarchy, nor priest, nor Mass, it is none the less real and historical; nay, it is more real because it is much more spiritual in its essence, and therefore much nearer to God, and it is even more truly historical in its essential antiquity and apostolicity when now emancipated from the false overgrowths of its Middle Age, and conscious again of an inherent identity with the purity and joy of its youth. This is no narrow conception of

[1] vi. 496.

a Church. It is a Church that embraces in its fold the saved and purified spirits of all time, the spiritual elect of the race, even the saintly souls that had whitened into the pure radiance of eternity amid the foul corruptions of the idolatry of Rome. It is the true Church built on the everlasting rock, the very Church of the Prophets and Apostles, and of Peter himself, against which the gates of hell should not prevail. Its strength and vitality do not lie in its mechanical framework nor in a divinely instituted form of external government; for in these respects the Church is free to fashion its own polity, and to adapt itself to the peculiar requirements of its age. This principle, which has unfortunately been so much departed from in the Reformed Church, was formulated with great felicity and precision in Article XX. of the Scottish Confession, in which it is said that one of the causes of General Councils "was for good policy and order to be constitute and observed in the Kirk in which (as in the House of God) it becometh all things to be done decently and in order. Not that we think that any policy, and one order in ceremonies, can be appointed for all ages, times, and places; for as ceremonies such as men have devised are but temporal, so may and ought they to be changed when they rather foster superstition than edify the

Church using the same."[1] The form of Church government and order is, therefore, a matter left to the free judgment of the Church, only under the limitation of more essential principles; neither Presbyterianism nor Episcopalianism is of absolutely divine appointment or authority; nor is either of them entitled to exclude or condemn the other, if it is found good for the order of the Church in its own sphere and is maintained merely as a matter of human right and arrangement.

This large and catholic doctrine regarding Church government and order was universally held in every branch of the Reformed Church in the age of the Reformation, and its consequence was the universal inter-communion and ministerial reciprocity of all the Reformed Churches with each other. But these Churches have all become much narrower and less catholic since then in consequence of their unhappy conflicts and controversies with each other. The theories of exclusive divine-right Episcopacy, and of divine-right Presbytery (which, however, was never carried to such an extreme) were unheard of in the age of the Reformation, and took their rise and shape only in consequence of the resistance forced upon the Presbyterian communions

[1] *Op. cit.* ii. 113.

by Episcopalian aggression and exclusivism. John Knox and the other leaders of the Scottish Reformation tower far above these internal and unhappy wranglings; and the same holds true of the original reformers of the English Church. Well would it have been for our country in the past, and for us now, if their successors had been as loyal to their principles.

The Protestant Principle of the Reformed Church is still a valid and vital principle, as essential and necessary to-day for the realisation of all true religion as it ever was amid the stress and storm of the Reformation of the sixteenth century. It is still in our different political, social, and intellectual conditions none other than the historical purification of Christianity from every creaturely element or human qualification that could prevent, adulterate, lower, or disturb the personal communion of the finite individual soul with the infinite living God. The reformation of Christianity from the pagan corruptions of the Roman Church might be viewed as an historical analogue of the reformation of the Old Testament Religion by the prophets from the corruptions of Syrian idolatry and nature-worship; and it was mainly upon this authoritative position—from which our latest Biblical Criticism would not

have driven them—that the reformers took their stand. As in the case of the prophetic reformation and revival, their work was at once the purification of the religious consciousness and its elevation to a higher stage of the spiritual life in God. It aimed at reproducing under the conditions of the time the direct and immediate consciousness of God revealed and manifested and made possible for men by the teaching, life, and work of Jesus; yet not by means of mere abstract rational philosophical speculation, but by entering through faith in Christ into the continuity of that spiritual relationship with God upon which He founded His Invisible Kingdom on earth. Christianity in the faith and consciousness of the leaders of the Reformed Church thus realised in the course of its historical development and diffusion through the world its essential inherent superiority to all forms of naturalistic religion or paganism, whether coarse and repulsive, or beautiful and refined; and it made this purified faith and consciousness the distinct and special organising principle of the Christian Church. In the history of spiritual religion our reformers first fully appreciated the deep and universal significance of the supreme religious truth, that "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." Not that this truth was

not realised by countless Christian thinkers and believers before; but that it was now made the starting-point of a new and higher historical departure in the organic history of the Church itself. Our reformers rightly set themselves to supersede the paganised Christianity of the mediæval Roman Church, and they no less justly claimed to be in advance of Luther's standpoint in their realisation of Christianity. Had they known it they might have appropriated Schelling's famous historical generalisation, though hardly in his terms, and said that the Roman Church at its very best was to represent the Petrine development of Christianity, as the Church of objective righteousness; the Lutheran Church its Pauline development, as the Church of subjective justification; and the Reformed Church its Johannine development, as the Church of the eternal Logos, of the self-manifestation of the absolute Reason and Personality of God in the spiritual redemption of the world, the true Universal Church of the future.

Certainly Zwingli, Calvin, and John Knox clearly understood the fundamental opposition and contrast between their conception of the Church and that of the Romanists, and how the application of their Protestant Principle practically inverted the relation of the individ-

ual to the Church, according to the celebrated distinction afterwards formulated by Schleiermacher, that "whereas Romanism makes the relation of the individual to Christ dependent on his relation to the Church, Protestantism makes the relation of the individual to the Church dependent on his relation to Christ." This is especially true of the Reformed Protestantism, and hence its deep-set and thoroughgoing antagonism to the Roman Church. In Romanism the Church is the primary ruling conception of the whole system, which has worked itself out logically into the form of a hierarchical authoritative institution with an infallible Head determining autocratically the religious faith and life of the individual in unquestioning subjection to it; whereas in the Reformed Protestantism the faith of the individual in his personal fellowship with Christ is the primary ruling conception, and the visible organisation of the particular Reformed Churches only takes shape in consequence of the voluntary union and communion of their members with each other on the basis of immediate relationship to Christ. Hence, on the one hand, the monarchical constitution of the Roman Church with the unconditional subjection of all its members to the absolute domination of one visible

Head; and, on the other hand, the democratic constitution of the Reformed Churches with the inalienable right of all their members to take part, directly or by representation, in their government. Romanism claims to have the power, and the sole power, of effectuating salvation by the magical virtue of its sacraments and the dispensation of the treasures of grace; the Reformed Protestantism regards the Church as only a means for uniting and exhibiting the common faith of its members, and its sacraments as only signs and seals of that faith. Protestantism is the complete emancipation of the individual from all human authority and mediation in the sphere of religion; it supersedes Romanism not merely by negativing its particular dogmas and depotentiating its ceremonies in the process of salvation, but by removing all saving efficacy from finite natural things, however qualified, and lifting the soul with all its felt need of salvation into the immediate presence and activity of God. The same relation holds true in regard to doctrine: the Roman external dogmatic legislation is replaced by the free spiritual faith and consent of the divinely renewed and enlightened self-consciousness of the Reformed Church.

In this immediacy of the religious relation between God and the soul, in the absolute

dependency of man for salvation upon God alone, lies the Protestant Principle of the Reformed Church, and its characteristic apprehension and organisation of Christianity as the divine religion of redemption. Surely a profound, vital, inexhaustible principle, and a basis upon which we may firmly stand not only in dealing with the ecclesiastical and theological problems of the time, but in confronting the doubtings and questionings of contemporary philosophy and science.

CHAPTER III.

The Protestant Principle of the Reformed Church applied to present ecclesiastical Relations.

The Protestant Principle of the Reformed Church is both a corrective purifying principle and a formative organising principle. It furnishes a test by which the Christian Church is to be brought back to the purity of its primitive standard; and it supplies a rule according to which the primitive ideal of the Church is again to be realised in the new historical conditions. The Reformed Church is therefore no mere negative correction of the corrupted mediæval Catholicism, nor is it even a mere formal reproduction of the presentation of primitive apostolical Christianity. It is a renovation of the Christian life and faith in a new Christian consciousness, which has its source in living union with the Head of the Christian Church, and in recognition of His presence and power in the spiritual regeneration of its members. The purified Church is the product of the

new Christian life in its common sense of a living dependence upon the Founder of the Church; and its visible form is determined by the application of the formative organising principle, under the guidance of the normative standard of the New Testament, to the embodiment, preservation, and extension of the purified Christianity.

The first reformers admitted the practical impossibility of producing a perfect Christian Church in a visible external form; and in this they were in entire accordance with the divine teaching that tares would mingle with the wheat until the harvest, and the elements of corruption and sin mix even with the holiest things until the end. But this very sense of imperfection raised them to a higher consciousness of the perfection which subsists eternally in the divine idea revealed to them, and which it was the chief end and endeavour of their whole work more and more to realise. The Reformed Church was in this way both ideally perfect, in so far as it consciously participated in the invisible perfection of the eternal divine reality; and at the same time actually imperfect, in so far as it could be embodied and presented only under the external limitation of finite human conditions. And what held of the Church as such, holds also of its apprehension of divine truth, or its system of

theology; these two sides of the whole organic regeneration and renovation of the Christian life being essentially inter-related and mutually conditioning each other. The Church as a divine institution, appearing at various stages and in various forms, is not a mere outward thing that can be taken entirely apart from the divine truth which it proclaims to the world; nor can that truth in its essential meaning and purpose be taken and understood apart from its connection with the Church, which is the vehicle through which it is exhibited and made practical in the lives of men. The Church can receive its truest form and its deepest consciousness only from the energy of the divine truth which it holds implicitly in it; and the theological system can have real subsistence and historical continuity only in so far as it is evolved through the Christian life of the Church, and reflects its spiritual vitality.

It is thus necessary in attempting to review and revivify the Theology of the Reformed Church to find again the historical standpoint of the Church, as the condition of any real insight into its ecclesiastical development and the basis of any fruitful cultivation of its theological system. It is from this point of view that we have been considering the Protestant Principle of the Re-

formed Church, as the historical and characteristic expression of its new life and faith. Taking the principle as expounded, let us now apply it, in the line of consistent movement and advance, to present ecclesiastical relations.

I. In the first place, it is impossible to ignore and overlook the still incumbent duty of the Reformed Church in all its branches to prosecute the polemic against the Roman system. This position nowadays, in consequence of the religious indifferentism of the time, is looked upon as antiquated and reactionary, and it almost requires some courage to speak it out plainly; but assuredly no greater error could be committed, not only in the interest of political liberty and civilisation, but of a really progressive Protestant theology, than to ignore or trifle with the present pretensions of the Church of Rome, or to adulterate the purity of the Reformed principle by unworthy concessions to it. The charitable hope of John Knox, that the Church of Rome might soon return to its primitive apostolical purity and embrace the purified Church of Scotland as its dearest sister, has not yet been realised, nor is there any symptom on the ecclesiastical horizon of an early or spontaneous reformation within its bounds. On the contrary,

the nineteenth century has witnessed only a deepening of the old errors by the very force of a certain logical necessity inherent in the system. The two new dogmas of the Roman Church — the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary and the Infallibility of the Pope —are only culminations of the old idolatrous spirit in a more refined form; and they were carried through in the full light of the nineteenth century with the deliberate purpose of strengthening and unifying the system in its endeavour to extinguish Protestantism and overthrow the progressive civilisation of the new time. Let no one say that there is no danger to Protestantism and the progress of divine truth in the present strength and purpose of the new Papalism, or be lulled into a false security by its supposed intellectual and spiritual impotence. The old duty still remains, not only of vindicating Protestant truth, but of convicting the Romanists of their error and winning them over to the better cause.

The new polemic must, however, be carried on with a due regard for the rights of our Roman Catholic fellow-citizens, and consequently more in accordance with the true spirit of the Reformed Church. Yet we need not reproach the leaders of the Reformed Church with the severity of their

methods; for they were all learned in the school of Rome, and the time demanded it. Nor should we forget that if the old penal laws against our fellow-subjects have been justly abrogated, they were never actually stained by a drop of the blood of a Roman Catholic; and that it was only by the power of the juster and freer spirit introduced by our reformers that they have been repealed, and not through any softening or humanising of the spirit of the Church of Rome.

Moreover, no part of our Reformed Theology so urgently requires new treatment, in the light of the conditions of the new time, as the development and polemical application of its Protestant Principle. Although this has always been, from its historical position in the van of Protestant theology, a primary duty of the Reformed Church, yet it must be confessed that we owe more in this department to the distinguished representatives of the advanced Lutheran Theology of the nineteenth century than to the modern theologians of the Reformed Church, who have been generally satisfied with repeating the old polemic, or have even thought it a sign of advanced and liberal thought to pass it over entirely. Not so such leaders of scientific theology as Baur, Nitzsch, Hase, and other Lutherans, who have brought new glory to their Church and new strength

to the Protestant cause by their able contributions to Protestant polemics, and especially by their defence of Protestant truth against the attack of Möhler. These were not bigots or obscurantists, but men of the freest and most progressive theological tendencies, and they saw clearly that nothing would be more fatal to the whole cause of religion and civilisation than a relapse of their Church into the spiritual bondage from which it had been emancipated, or even the spread of general indifference to the danger of such a relapse. With us the polemic against Rome is never so competently represented, and it is seldom wisely prosecuted; yet is it none the less incumbent and obligatory upon the Church, if it is to maintain its historical position. The polemic can be prosecuted now with much greater advantage, as the modern science of Christian Symbolics or Comparative Christian Theology has thrown new light on the essential relations of Romanism and Protestantism.

Nor need we be afraid to say that we have much to learn in the practical sphere from the Church of Rome, from the devotion and self-denial of its clergy, its marvellous faculty for organisation and internal administration, its unrivalled skill in reconciling and using differences of capacity and character, its external statesman-

ship and unflinching determination to permeate every human activity and relation, its equalisation of the rich and poor in public worship, and its cosmopolitan adaptability to all the differences of country, climate, race, circumstances, and conditions of life. In much of all this, Protestantism still comes short of the Church of Rome; yet none the less, even from a view to the better application of its practical energies, must the Reformed Church maintain its Protestant Principle anew.

II. But even John Knox saw the principle of his protestation in the whole range of its application, and not merely in its external bearing upon the corruptions of the Roman Church. It was to him, as it must be to us, the principle of the universal purification of Christianity from all the naturalistic and non-Christian elements with which it may be at any time adulterated. The principle has thus to be applied with no less earnestness and thoroughness to the internal purification of the Protestant Church itself in all its branches. The purer branches of Protestantism have therefore been compelled from time to time to protest against the retention in other branches, or even the reintroduction into other branches, of certain elements of the Roman system. We may pass over the instances of this protestation in the

Continental Churches; but it is impossible in any attempt to explicate and apply the Protestant Principle of the Reformed Church, to pass over the protestation against the position taken up and occupied for more than two centuries by the Church of England. On this delicate question it is a duty of self-defence to speak out clearly and firmly.

Many in this country will remember in how trenchant and convincing a way the late Duke of Argyll brought forward in a newspaper discussion the concessions regarding the origin and development of Episcopacy made by Dr. Lightfoot, Bishop of Durham, who was the greatest exegetical scholar the Church of England produced in the nineteenth century. But strong and striking as it is, Dr. Lightfoot's testimony is only a minimum of the historical evidence that may be adduced against the exclusive Episcopalism of the present-day Anglican Church. Dr. Lightfoot's repudiation of the apostolical authority of the Episcopate as a special divine institution, is no new view in exegetical theology, and is now held by every Protestant exegete worthy of the name; and so far from being a falling away from the original principle of the Reformed polity of the Church of England, it is but an expression of the view held in the sixteenth century by all the reformers and

scholars of that Church. Dr. Lightfoot's views are even more conservative than those of Cranmer and Parker, and are in all essentials in agreement with those of Jewel and Whitgift, Hooker and Stillingfleet, and even Ussher and Hall.

The Reformation in the Church of England, it is well known, was largely influenced at the outset, notwithstanding Henry VIII.'s dislike of Luther, by the Lutheran Reformation and especially by the moderate and conciliatory counsels of Melanchthon. But in the time of Edward VI. the English Reformation came more pronouncedly under the influence and guidance of the Swiss reformers; and the work of reformation, so far as it was completed in the reigns of Edward VI. and Elizabeth, was essentially in accordance with the ecclesiastical conception of the Reformed Church, with a moderated Calvinism in theology. During the first age of the Reformation the Church of Cranmer maintained no such view as that of a special divine institution of Episcopacy, nor did it claim the right to repudiate the ordination of the other Reformed Churches, and reordain any of their ministers who joined the communion of the Church of England. On the contrary, the orders of the other Reformed Churches were fully recognised, and their ministers were admitted to the highest offices and functions

in the Church of England without the idea of the necessity of reordination at Episcopal hands being yet dreamed of. Such representative authorities as Hallam, Keble, and Dean Stanley are at one in holding that the first English reformers and the statesmen of Queen Elizabeth would have been astonished at any claim of exclusive sanctity for the Episcopal order. Cranmer's own views on the subject were as free as those ever held in any Presbyterian Church; and even Hooker advocates the expediency and superiority of the Episcopate only on the ground of its great antiquity and its greater conduciveness to order. Thus it was that Cranmer called several of the Swiss divines to fill the theological chairs in Oxford and Cambridge, men like Martin Bucer and Peter Martyr and Paul Fagius, who laid the foundation of the exegetical and historical science of the Church of England. Thus too, to take a more familiar instance, John Knox discharged the duties of the ministry in the Church of England for some years, was appointed chaplain to Edward VI., was offered but declined the bishopric of Rochester, afterwards ministered for a short time to the English congregation in Frankfort, and, though deeply hated by Elizabeth for his celebrated "Blast against the Monstrous Regiment of Women," exercised by his writings and counsel

considerable influence in furthering the English Reformation. This fact is sometimes, nay often, entirely misrepresented as showing that John Knox recognised the modern *jure divino* Episcopacy of the English Church, and even introduced it into Scotland in the form of the Superintendent. Nothing could be more unhistorical or erroneous than this rendering of the relation. The simple fact is that the Church of England in that first age of the Reformation had nothing in its ecclesiastical constitution and practice which prevented any Presbyterian minister from entering into, and at once discharging all the essential functions of its ministry. There is no result of recent historical study more certain than this, that during all its early period the Church of England was truly a Reformed Church in polity as in doctrine, and in living communion and ministerial reciprocity with all the other Reformed Churches. In 1582, to cite another instance, Archbishop Grindal received a Scottish minister, John Morrison, who had been ordained by the Synod of Lothian, and appointed him at once, without further ordination, to ministerial duty in the Diocese of Canterbury, declaring that he had been ordained "according to the laudable form and rite of the Scottish Reformed Church."

The Church of England has changed since

then, and even alienated itself from the communion of the Reformed Churches; and this fundamental alteration in polity, advocated and inaugurated by Archbishop Bancroft, was carried out by Laud, the real founder of High Churchism with all its narrowness and pretentiousness, which has no deeper basis as a theory of corporeal spirituality than continuation or imitation of Romanism and the servile sycophancy of ambitious archbishops. We all know how Laud's effort to establish in Scotland the change of polity was frustrated by the stool thrown by Jenny Geddes at the head of Dean Hannah on the 23rd July 1637, as he stood up in the church of St. Giles to read the notorious Service Book. This summary disposal of Laud's Liturgy and policy by the common people of Edinburgh was an act not only ever memorable in Scottish history, but of much wider historical significance. "Never," says Dean Stanley,[1] "except in the days of the French Revolution, did a popular tumult lead to such important results. The stool which was on that occasion flung at the head of the Dean of Edinburgh extinguished the English Liturgy entirely in Scotland for the seventeenth century, to a great extent even till

[1] *Lectures on the History of the Church of Scotland*, 2nd ed., p. 72.

the nineteenth; and gave to the Civil War of England an impulse which only ended in the overthrow of the Church and Monarchy." But as the Church of England had no John Knox among its own reformers, neither had it any power among its people sufficient to oppose the Romanising innovations of Laud, who practically revolutionised the historical relation of the Church of England to all the other branches of the Reformed Church.

The result is known to students of history. After the Civil War and the short ascendency of Puritanism came the Restoration, and in its train the Act of Uniformity of 1662, well called the "St. Bartholomew's Act" of the English Church, which drove two thousand Presbyterian ministers from its fold, among them the ripest fruits of the piety and virtue of England. From that day till now the Church of England, with all its proud pretensions and claims to catholicity, has been in the view of the historian the narrowest, the most exclusive, and the most schismatic Church in Western Christendom. It has held in its high offices, as it holds now, men of the greatest learning, purity, and catholicity of feeling; but their catholicity has been only their own private opinion or practice, which has been larger and more comprehensive than the order of their Church. The Church of England has shut its

gates to the ministers of all the other Protestant Churches who are unable to abjure the sanctity of their ordination, and pass under the humiliating yoke of a new Episcopal ordination. It cannot, indeed, be held by the strictest interpretation of the actual constitution of the Church of England that it anywhere explicitly repudiates the ordination of the other Protestant Churches within their own domain. The Law of the Church of England as such, does not "unchurch" other Churches; and Archbishop Bramhall condemned the offensive habit as late as 1659. But the operation of the law has gradually led to the exclusiveness of the High Church party, and ecclesiastical bigotry and intolerance can go no further.

The nineteenth century saw the High Church view developed to its utmost and worked up into a complete ecclesiastical theory through the Tractarian movement. It is a common mistake to suppose that this movement was a peculiar product of the nineteenth century; it was only a revival and reproduction of the High Churchism of Laud, who held all its cardinal positions, and exercised all his cunning and determination to work them into the one uniform all-ruling system of the Church both in England and Scotland. The High Episcopal theory of Anglo-Catholicism

in regard to the exclusive apostolicity of the orders of the English Church has always involved the doctrines of apostolical succession, of baptismal regeneration and direct sacramentarian efficacy, of the authority of tradition, and of the divine right of the Church, as a visible institution set up to rule the faith as well as to effect the salvation of its members. It is assuredly the nearest approach that can be made in any ostensibly Protestant form to the Church of Rome; and consistent thinkers who go thus far, like John Henry Newman and Henry Manning, cannot but sink down again from the severe spiritual heights of an independent self-responsible Protestantism into the self-repudiation and slavery of the Church of Rome.

Anglo-Catholicism has no foundation in the English Reformation of the sixteenth century; nor has it any standing in the Articles of the English Church; and when taken on its merits, it is found to have no right within the Reformed Church at all. We need not pause to review the exploded sophistry of the Tractarian party as it culminated in the celebrated tract Number 90, nor even to consider the tenability of the movement as a *via media* between Protestantism and Romanism; for the ablest leaders of the party have long since refuted their own positions by denouncing them in the Church

of Rome. But considered fairly in itself, it is no exaggeration to say that the Anglo-Catholic theory is the poorest, the weakest, the most precarious upon which a doctrine of the Church has ever been based. It rests ultimately, as is admitted, on mere probability. Its strained idea of apostolical succession, according to which the continued existence of the Kingdom of God upon earth is made entirely dependent upon a provable succession of material touches of Episcopal hands —so that the Church would entirely cease as an institution of grace if some calamity were to remove its bishops—is incomparably inferior as a ground of certainty to either the supreme immediate infallibility of the Papal Church or the asserted personal inspiration of any individual visionary who may choose to make the claim. Who will vouch with all the historical resources of the age for this unbroken chain stretching through so many centuries, many of them hidden in deepest darkness? And who would care even to examine into the universal morality or spirituality of these assumed vehicles of the highest grace? The terrible anxiety of the party about a flaw in the validity of the Episcopal ordination of Archbishop Parker, the noble and enlightened successor of Cranmer, which led some of them to seek consecration anew at the hands of certain Russian

and Greek bishops, is surely of itself a *reductio ad absurdum* of their claim to be the representatives of a truly catholic Church.

The pretentious and arrogant repudiation by the Anglo-Catholic divines of the great leaders of the new spiritual life of the world, whom they have had the effrontery to speak of as "Luther, Melanchthon, and Co.," would be intolerable if it were more than the contemptible index of weak and narrow minds. Their patristic learning dangled before the eyes of practical Englishmen is at the best but poor schoolboy translation-work that is equally void of historical insight and masterly judgment. This antiquarian attempt to find the principles and ideals of a true Christian faith and life for the modern world in the struggling and but half-emancipated thought of the Greek and Latin Fathers, rather than in the clear, free, strong thinking of the reformers, could give us nothing even formally new, but at the best could only restore the dim vision of the past with all the limitation of its points of view. In the sphere of the boasted patristic literature, the last refuge and resort of Anglo-Catholicism, the purifying principle that we are considering has to be applied —and has even begun to be applied, not only by German historians but by a younger and not less learned generation of Oxford scholars. We might

quite easily show that the ecclesiastical idolatry of the mere forms of the old Greek and Latin dogmas, even when expressed at their highest in the decrees of Oecumenical Councils, is but a bending before a refined pagan element derived from the intellectual forms of Greek speculation, and not from the pure spiritual substance of the Christian revelation itself. But even when we allow to it all possible value and acknowledge the devotion with which it is charged, the patristic learning manifestly refutes itself by the very endeavour to give its main material an authority which it did not possess in its time, and which in its mere secondary reflection could be only as moonlight unto sunlight, a dull and feeble substitute for the ever-present energy and illumination of the living Spirit of God. It is needless to add that the whole extravaganza of the extreme ritualistic development, the elaborate millinery of its vestments, its bowings and genuflexions, its relighting of tapers and burning of incense, its crucifixes and its calendared saints, its devotion to the Blessed Virgin, its secret confessionals, its hankering after the five abandoned sacraments, its assertion of the Real Presence and the absolute efficacy of sacramental ministration, its rehabilitation of the priest, its depotentiation of Scripture, its consecrations of outward things, and its resuscitation of the

monastic life, not to speak of the thousand forms and ceremonies in which it revels in detail, nor of the fond imaginings and fruitless emotional luxury with which it fills up the useful hours of our hard-pressed modern life—these and all such things are fundamentally condemned by the principle of the Reformed Church, not only as spiritual mockery, but as merely modern imitations of the old pagan religious ceremonialism out of which they really arose. To be "unchurched" by the Anglo-Catholic party is no humiliation to the more genuine branches of the Reformed Protestantism, which cannot cease to protest against its superstition, idolatry, and uncharitableness, and whose chief duty in view of it all is still to bear practical testimony against it by advancing consistently on their own higher way.

The arbitrary and external introduction into the Church of England of the High Church view of ecclesiastical relations cannot be justified by any theory of development. There is still truth in the description of the Church of England as the most incongruous and inconsistent ecclesiastical system of Christendom; and of its boasted catholicity as only consisting in the heterogeneous combination and toleration of a Popish liturgy, a Calvinistic creed, and an Arminian clergy. And its reactionary tendency and exclusivism afford no workable basis

for real union with the other Reformed Churches. The Church of England has practically treated the other Reformed Churches for more than two centuries with something like scorn, in proudly breaking the old intercommunity of ministerial service with them; and its servile imitation of the mediæval Roman Church, which it yet affects to correct, has only drawn upon it the loss of many of its most gifted sons, who, under purer conditions of training and environment, might have led the world in the forefront of modern Christian thought. That the Church of England requires radical reform; that the pomp of its priesthood needs to be humbled, and the sincerity and sound sense of its laymen elevated to their Christian rights; that the artificial barriers it has interposed between its communion and the Protestant religious life of the rest of England need to be broken down—that is only what can be claimed in the name of common justice at the hands of the Law which established the Church; and if the Church is to avert destruction or self-dissolution, and be purified and expanded, it will only be by returning again to the generous spirit of its reformers, to their larger and truer catholicity, and to their noble fidelity, amid so much greater difficulty and danger, to the principles of the Reformed Church. Viewed in the light of the Reformed

principle, the Anglican Church has undoubtedly fallen from the genuine purity, freedom, and catholicity of the age of the Reformation; and neither an uncritical parade of patristic lore, nor a fantastic longing for intercommunion with the gilded iconolatry and barbarism of the Russian Church, nor a spurious sacramentarianism, nor a pedantic pageantry of ceremonial can compensate for the suppressed sympathies of the majority of its clergy, its ecclesiastical isolation, and the estrangement of so much of the best piety of the English people.

But, while this is held on the ground of a common historical principle, the great achievement of the English Church in thus far maintaining its form of Christianity among the bulk of the people and the higher classes, the accurate learning of its scholars, the valuable contributions of its theologians to apologetics, biblical criticism, and exegetical, historical, and homiletical theology, notwithstanding the vacillation and weakness of its doctrinal development, are all frankly recognised and appreciated by the other branches of the Reformed Church. The ecclesiastical ideal of its reformers was to make the Church of England the living centre and rallying point of all the Reformed Churches; and if its leaders and guides were to take up this splendid conception again

and endeavour to realise it, they might be blessed in doing the greatest work for the Reformed Protestantism that the world has seen since the age of the Reformation.

III. Turn we now to the application of the Reformed Protestant Principle to the Reformed Church in Scotland.

It is manifest that any relevant criticism of the historical position of any branch of the Reformed Church must be founded upon a comparison of its actual state with its essential ideal. But in the case of the Reformed Church in Scotland this criticism is complicated with the preliminary question raised by the existing plurality of its branches, as to whether some one of these or all of them are to be regarded as constituting the Scottish Reformed Church. The claim of the present established Church to represent the historical Scottish Church of the Reformation is disputed—as is well known—by at least other three communions, the Scottish Episcopal Church, the United Free Church, and the Free Church. But without embarrassing ourselves with the discussion of these rival claims, it is enough for our purpose to view them all as legitimate branches of the Reformed Church, and to estimate their worth, as so many factors in the

historical movement, according to the fidelity with which they have maintained and are maintaining the principle of the Reformation. Let us, from this point of view, briefly glance at some of the applications of the Protestant Principle to the present condition of the chief branches of the Reformed Church in Scotland. And as the doctrinal relation in general will form the subject of further discussion, we have here to consider more particularly the application to the worship and constitution of our Reformed Churches.

1. As regards *worship*, the application of the Protestant Principle is so obvious that we need not dwell in detail upon it. There was no side of their work to which the reformers gave more careful and anxious consideration. The whole purpose of their work was to bring the human soul into a purer and more immediate relation with God; and this relation was to be realised at its highest in the solemnity of public worship. Hence their severe removal of everything savouring of idolatry from the forms of public worship, and the purism of their own practice and institutions. With their deep sense of the awfulness of the soul's immediate approach to God, nothing was so repellent to their minds as the idea of an elaborate ceremonial in public worship, such as they had been accustomed to in the Roman

ritual; and nothing was so abhorrent to them as the idea of making an act of worship a means of gratifying human taste and fancy, or gathering together a gadding, indifferent crowd. We may not be able to find ourselves at home, even in our devoutest moments, in all the forms of their devotion; but the severe simplicity of these forms, their soul-stirring pathos and directness, and the agony of heart that trembles through them, can never become old. Yet there was no narrowness, no mere subjective phantasy, no mere wild wandering of undisciplined desire, among these great leaders of men. We do them wrong when we think of them after the bare and barren crudities and irrationalities of later times.

It is important to remember their relation to the liturgical question, a question still agitated among us without any very just regard to their actual position on either side. The Reformed Churches of the first age were not averse to a liturgy as such; and indeed each of them—with the exception of the Hungarian Church, and of the French Church, which by its unhappy history depended upon the Genevan forms—constructed its own liturgy in accordance with its own special wants. The Scottish Church seems to have used for a time in its first struggles the English Prayer-Book; but when the Reformation was completed,

it was supplied by John Knox with his Book of Common Order, which consisted mainly of the liturgy he had drawn up, on the basis of the liturgy of the Church of Calvin, for the congregations at Frankfort and Geneva, and which was adopted and ratified by the General Assembly in 1564. John Knox had even taken part in the revision of the English Prayer-Book, and his strong hand removed from the communion service what he considered its remaining idolatrous element; and although he was baffled in his desire to thoroughly revise and purify it, he yet used it, with some limitation, during his short ministry to the English exiles at Frankfort until the unseemly demonstrations of the Coxians drove him away to Geneva. John Knox's Liturgy undoubtedly did good service in the early Reformed Church of Scotland at a time when the churches were sometimes supplied only with readers or with imperfectly trained ministers; and it continued to be used in the services of the Church of Scotland until the year 1647, when it was superseded by the Westminster Directory of Public Worship, which remains the authorised standard of the Church of Scotland's form of worship.

The Book of Common Order observed a due regard for the freedom of the Reformed Church by its not being imposed in a strict way, and

by its encouraging and providing for the use of extempore prayer. After having long dropped out of sight, it was re-edited by the celebrated Edward Irving in 1831, again by Dr. John Cumming of London in 1840, again by David Laing in his edition of Knox's Works in 1864, and again in 1868 and 1901, with an excellent introduction, by Dr. Sprott. All the other Reformed Churches have preserved their original liturgies and kept them in use until this day, although several of them, such as that of Geneva, have been modified in their dogmatic expressions by rationalistic curtailment and attenuation. The associations and feelings of the people in the Continental branches of the Reformed Church are all with their liturgies: the old forms of prayer are the perpetual memorials of the heroic struggles and triumphs of their Churches, and safeguards of the unbroken continuity of their spiritual life and faith. In this respect our Scottish Presbyterian Church presents the exceptional instance of an interruption, or arrested development; although even the Westminster Directory of Public Worship provides sketches or models of prayers for the guidance of the clergy. In our own times the Church Service Society of the Church of Scotland has prepared and published a Book of Common Order, being forms of prayer

for public worship, and services for the administration of the sacraments and other ordinances. It is an elegant eclectic collection, but it has no authority in the Church.

The application of the Protestant Principle to the liturgical question is simple and clear. Everything turns upon what the proposed liturgy contains and how it is to be introduced. The only exception that can be taken to the useful collection referred to, may be grounded on the fact that sufficient regard has not been paid to the special liturgical type, and to the rich liturgical resources of the early Reformed Church, the product being in consequence somewhat colourless and feeble and imitative; and the undoubted lesson of our liturgical history is that any attempt to impose such forms upon the Church at large, or to make them other than optional by the voice of the people, would probably be attended with disappointing and even disastrous results. It cannot be doubted that here, too, the spirit of the Reformed Church is all in the direction of variety, freedom, and self-responsibility; and any liturgical suppression of the healthy play of these essential qualities in our worship, or of the spontaneous sympathy and desires of the congregation, is undoubtedly to be deprecated and guarded against.

2. There are many other relations of the Reformed Church in Scotland to which the Protestant Principle might be applied, such as its foreign missions to the heathen, in which the anti-pagan principle has received new illustration and confirmation; and its educational work generally, which owed its bold inception to John Knox, and has been sustained in its splendid history by its trust in the purifying and elevating efficacy of all true intellectual enlightenment. But passing over such applications, there are at least two burning *constitutional* questions, deeply affecting the well-being and prospects of all the branches of the Scottish Reformed Church, which have been exercising earnest minds among us, and which it is impossible in this connection to overlook. These are, the question of the Relation of the Reformed Church to the State, or the question of Disestablishment, and the question of the Relation of the Reformed Church to its own Spiritual Jurisdiction, or the question of Spiritual Independence.

(1) We take up, then, first the question of the *relation of the Church to the State* in the Reformed Church. We pass over as irrelevant to our discussion the views of atheistic, positivist, and agnostic politicians, of mere communistic and socialistic thinkers, and even of thoroughgoing

advocates of religious equality in the sense that all religious communions are to be equally recognised by the State or equally ignored. Confining our consideration to the standpoint of Church Protestantism, we inquire into the bearing of the historical principle of the Reformed Church on this critical question.

In the age of the Reformation three views were held in the three great Churches regarding the relation of the Church to the State. In the Roman Church the view was long accepted that the State was subordinate to the Church, a view resolutely maintained from the days of Hildebrand, and which subjected all the governments of Western Europe to the jurisdiction of the Papal Court. This view, it need hardly be said, was unanimously repudiated by the reformers as inconsistent with the Christian liberty and rights of the different States and peoples; and by their counsel and with their concurrence all the Protestant princes and parliaments publicly and legally abjured it, and threw off both the civil and the spiritual jurisdiction of Rome. The second view held regarding the relation of the Church to the State was the very opposite, that the Church was subordinate to the State, and entirely dependent upon its jurisdiction and laws. This view — known as Erastianism from its

advocacy by Thomas Erastus, a celebrated physician and professor at Heidelberg about 1580—was practically adopted in Germany and England, being conceded by Luther, although in a hesitating way and at an early stage of his work, and also by many of the Episcopalian divines, as the only available means of emancipating the Church from the foreign despotism of Rome. Our Reformed theologians, however, from the outset repudiated this view as well, pronouncing it fatal to the spiritual liberty and independence of the Church, which they regarded as being indeed visibly contained within the State, yet as having by its very nature a special spiritual jurisdiction derived from a higher source. So they enunciated the view that the Church had a co-ordinate jurisdiction with the State, the State having absolute jurisdiction in all political and civil matters, even in so far as they reached within the material or outward organisation of the visible Church, and the Church having absolute jurisdiction, called the Power of the Keys, in matters purely spiritual and disciplinary, which passed by their very nature into the inner spiritual life and rose in that connection into the higher invisible world. These co-ordinate jurisdictions were evidently apt to come into collision in the sphere of practice, and it was always diffi-

cult to give them precise definition and delimitation; but this was practically done by the Reformed Churchmen and Statesmen through the particular form of the constitutional alliance or connection into which they brought the Church with the State. In every instance they had to deal with what was a Christian State. The right of the Church to a certain special sphere of jurisdiction in the State was not disputed by the authorities of the State when the Reformation was accomplished; but it had to be attained, by reason of differences as to the extent of that sphere, through resolute struggle with the authorities of some of the States, as was the case in Scotland. Zwingli had little difficulty in inaugurating the modern Reformed State Church at Zurich; Calvin at Geneva, by his strong moral determination, brought the Church for a time almost into the form of a theocracy, with the State again subordinate; while John Knox, with his profounder political wisdom, succeeded in realising a juster discrimination and balance of the two powers than the Swiss reformers effected. The disturbing and capricious influence of King James led to the still clearer and more emphatic definition of the jurisdiction of the Church by Andrew Melville in the Second Book of Discipline, which, with the later hard-won Pres-

byterian safeguard, is still the constitutional position of the established Church of Scotland. Unfortunately, soon after the Revolution Settlement the State introduced new confusion and disturbance, which have lasted till this hour, by the reimposition of patronage in 1712. But the abolition of it, after long and unhappy struggles, in 1874, has practically restored the constitution of the Church of Scotland to the purity and freedom of the Church of John Knox and Andrew Melville, or at least of the Revolution Settlement.

These, then, were the three forms in which the relation between the Church and State was embodied in the Roman, Lutheran, and Reformed Churches; and these forms practically remain to this day. But there was another theory enunciated in the age of the Reformation regarding the relation of the Church to the State; it was the theory advanced by the Anabaptists and the fanatical weavers and insurrectionary prophets of Zwickau: the theory of the absolute separation of the Church from the State, and the right of the Church to do anything in its own sphere independently of the State. This theory, although it unsettled the vacillating Carlstadt, was emphatically repudiated by all the great reformers. Luther even rushed from his concealment in Wartburg to suppress by force of arms, if need were, the commotions

and devastation it was causing; and Zwingli and Calvin discussed it earnestly, and firmly rejected it as incompatible with the true freedom, safety, and prosperity of the Reformed Church. The theory is really based upon the view that the State is merely a lower secular institution that has to do only with secular things and has no proper function or standing in the sphere of religion, which is exclusively the affair of the Church.

Put in this way, the Anabaptist principle of the absolute separation of the Church from the State is the logical premiss of all consistent advocacy of disestablishment on the professed basis of the limitation of the State to its own sphere. It is this very principle that was recently revived in our midst by the representatives of the first dissenting branches of the Scottish Presbyterian Church, amalgamated into the United Presbyterian Church in 1847. There was no branch of the Reformed Church in Scotland which deserved to be more highly esteemed for its earnest faith, its resolute self-support, and its good works than the United Presbyterian Church; and nothing can be meant in disparagement of these in reviewing the position which it thought good to occupy, and which it has carried into the United Free Church. In fact, disestablishment was not a principle in the constitution of the

United Presbyterian Church; it was only a policy which its leaders adopted, in consequence of long alienation from the existing established Church, and of the political influence which so largely modified the opinions of many excellent Churchmen. It is not identical with the principle of voluntaryism, which is opposed at most only to State endowment, and is quite compatible with a constitutionally established alliance of the Church with the State. But in so far as the policy of disestablishment in the United Presbyterian Church involved a principle, it was the principle of the new secular theory of the State, according to which the recognition or promotion of any Church as a Christian institution lies entirely outwith the proper sphere and function of the State.

This principle is entirely contrary to the whole history of the Reformed Church, and its theory of the function and character of the State diametrically opposed to the whole theology and ecclesiastical polity of the Reformed theologians. To them the State was an institution of God brought into being and maintained in His providence for the protection and furtherance of the whole well-being of man, and for the manifestation of His glory in its own sphere. As they found the manifestation of the glory of God

everywhere in nature, notwithstanding its apparent confusion and disorder, so did they find an even higher manifestation of God's glory in the civil life and government of men, notwithstanding all its imperfections and abuses, and even its too common denial and dishonouring of God, of His law, and of His truth. This profound view has been nowhere expressed with more earnestness and sincerity than in Article XXIV. of the Scottish Confession of Faith of 1560,[1] wherein it is said: "We confess and acknowledge empires, kingdoms, dominions, and cities to be distincted and ordained by God; the powers and authorities in the same, be it of emperors in their empires, of kings in their realms, dukes and princes in their dominions, and of other magistrates in free cities,—to be God's holy ordinance, ordained for manifestation of His own glory, and for the singular profit and commodity of mankind: so that whosoever goes about to take away or to confound the whole state of civil policies, now long established, we affirm the same men not only to be enemies to mankind, but also wickedly to fight against God's expressed will." It was on the ground of this recognition of a certain divine mission and authority in the State, under the universal headship of Christ, that the Re-

[1] Cf. *Works of John Knox*, vol. ii. pp. 93–120.

formed Church was justified in entering into alliance and connection with the State; and, on the other hand, it was because the State saw in the confessed principles and beliefs of the Reformed Church not only nothing antagonistic or dangerous to its own proper function and ends, but rather what was fitted to maintain and promote these and the highest well-being of the people generally, that it in turn was justified in giving protection and support to the Reformed Church. The negative theory of the State in relation to religion is quite at variance with the deliberate positions and declarations of the Reformed Confessions and theologians.

And, looking at the theory on its own ground, it is not too much to say that it is also being more and more refuted and discarded by the very progress of legal and political science. All recent histories of political and legal speculation go to show that the negative and dualistic theory of the State has been the product of the unhistorical individualism and enlightenment of the eighteenth century, and of the French Revolution in its violent reaction from the autocratic divine-right monarchy and Church of the Middle Ages, and — still later — of the rapid extension of the political franchise to those whose conscience had not been educated in the discharge

of political duties, and who had been looking upon the State from the outside as only a possible means of advancing their own interests and aims. We must therefore be upon our guard against accepting as an absolute and permanent principle what is already beginning to be recognised as but a transitory and superficial phase of political conviction. Even the slightest observation of the movement and tendency of contemporary legislation among ourselves must convince the most obstinate adherent of political secularism and non-interference with the moral and spiritual life, that his view of the State is being rapidly superseded by the irrefutable facts of political practice. The State is rising again from its temporary degradation to a bureaucratic and police arrangement for co-ordinating antagonistic wills and securing material comforts and advantages, and is realising its wide range of duty once more in asserting its right to deal with every force or form of life that takes visible shape within its bounds. It cannot ignore the moral condition of the individual, nor the sanctity of the family, nor the obligations that arise even from free association and combination on the basis of spiritual conviction and opinion. The State is no mere abstract external power, nor, even at its lowest and worst, any mere arbitrary embodiment of

irresponsible authority; and in its highest modern form and consciousness, it presents itself as no less than a great moral organism constituted by free rational individuals who carry their conscience and their spiritual convictions into its most material ongoings. Most of all may this be said of the British Constitution, which with all its remaining imperfections and faults, and its too frequent aberrations, is the product of the struggle for freedom and justice of many generations of earnest Christian men. Even in view of all its past failings and errors, to represent it as no better than the government of a Nero, as it is sometimes represented, is surely to do it tremendous injustice and to forget the ways of God with men. The British State is, as a matter of fact, what British men as its free and responsible citizens make it; and for them to repudiate the possibility of moving it to Christian ends is surely to repudiate the very power and wisdom of their own Christianity.

But even the strongest advocates among Scottish dissenters of the separation of the Church from the State hesitate to carry their principle to its logical result. Not one of them yet stands for the entire unmodified secularisation of the State; nor do they even hold that it is possible for the State to ignore the Christian Church entirely or

escape from all Christian obligation. The examples of the United States and the British Colonies are too disputable or too recent to establish any certainty of conclusion. It is not clear whether Protestantism or Romanism or utter secularism is yet to win in these unfenced fields; nor can we forecast the influence upon them of any great constitutional change in the religious relations of this country involving the removal of the ancient landmarks of their acknowledged models and guides. Even in the United States there is no absolute separation of the Church from the State. The Houses of Congress and of Representatives, like our Houses of Parliament, are opened daily with prayers by chaplains appointed for the purpose; other chaplains are appointed and paid by the State in certain branches of the public service; and the Christian sentiment and convictions of the legislators and judges in the several States are pronouncedly in favour of the protection and support of specially Christian institutions. If the advocates of disestablishment in this country who still occupy a religious and Protestant standpoint go only thus far, they are but holding in a weaker form the Protestant Principle; and the only question they really raise is this: whether the relation between Church and State is to be of an unconstituted,

non-statutory, indefinite kind, and to be left entirely to the changing and capricious political feeling and opinion of the hour; or to be constituted, circumscribed, and safeguarded by clear, distinct, constitutional law as the condition of a practical and workable just determination and limitation of the relation. And if this be so, surely those who are pressing disestablishment on a Protestant basis may be asked, in view of the present tendency of legislation and the increasing clamour and pretensions of new quasi-religious fanaticisms, to pause and consider whether, if the existing adjustment, representing as it does the work of long centuries, were removed, something incomparably less tolerable or acceptable may not yet be put in its place; and whether the very protection and peace which they have hitherto enjoyed under its legal sanction, might not be endangered a hundredfold more by its removal.

We are looking at the question simply as a matter of principle, and are not concerned with particular imperfections in the existing relations, nor even with the peculiarities of special endowments, which, either in their origin or extent, cannot be properly regarded on the ground of principle, but only on the ground of historical guarantee and of right at common law. It may

indeed be more difficult than ever under the new conditions — so difficult as to tax the highest resources of theological and political science—to adjust and harmonise the relation practically in the modern State; and if the theologians cannot show how it is to be done in connection with the traditional institution of our country, the politicians may even be justified in attempting to solve the problem anew from their own standpoint of right and humanity. If it is made clear that the Presbyterian Churches are unable to compose their differences, and confessedly hold no universal truth about God which they can call upon the State to recognise in practice; and if it is admitted that they have even fallen away so far from their original catholic doctrine that they have come to regard the State as an institution entirely outside of the sphere of their ecclesiastical work, and its legislation and administration of justice as merely human things, dependent only upon the human will and independent of the living presence and working of God, so that they can find God only in their own private devotions or religious assemblies or secret conventicles; then the State itself may reasonably look round to see whether there can nowhere be found a more universal doctrine of God, compatible with its own system and with its

just exercise of its proper function, than so narrow and inadequate a scheme of Christianity. On such grounds, and on such grounds alone, as it seems to me, would the State be justified in severing the Reformed Church from its connection and considering—if it is not to be altogether godless and more indifferent about religion than about any other thing in the nature of men or within its whole range of duty—whether it may not again entrust the Roman Church with the endowments and the position once taken from it, in view of its greater consistency, its undeniable recognition of God, and its abundant good works; or the Scottish Episcopal Church, which has always protested against the Revolution Settlement; or, failing this, whether it may not even have recourse to a religion of pure humanity and morality, if any great thinker — positivist or socialistic it may be—can submit such a system to it on a scientific basis. These seem to be the logical consequences of the Presbyterian demand for the absolute separation of the Church from the State; and when thus looked at, they are only so many new grounds for those who still occupy the Protestant standpoint maintaining the existing institution and developing the truth of its position into better harmony with the political conditions of the time.

(2) As the alienation and voluntaryism of the first secession offshoots of the Scottish Church led to their policy of disestablishment, so the controversies arising out of the unhappy collisions of the ecclesiastical and civil courts in consequence of the re-enactment of patronage led to the formulation of the principle of Absolute Spiritual Independence, as the watchword of the Free Church of Scotland and its theory of the *relation of the Church to its own spiritual jurisdiction.* This is a much subtler and more profound position than the enunciation of a practical policy of disestablishment, although it has latterly also been conjoined with that policy; and it deserves more careful and earnest review in any discussion of fundamental principles owing to its undoubtedly higher and deeper relations.

Absolute Spiritual Independence is not a term in the constitutional order of the Scottish Presbyterian Church, but is a comparatively recent term. Virtually involved in the arguments of the Non-intrusionists when dealing with particular instances of presentees pressed on reclaiming congregations, it received more pronounced expression in the anti-patronage struggle as a whole immediately before the Disruption of 1843; and since then it has been developed with greater clearness and force as a distinct

ecclesiastical principle rising above these special historical accidents. It is implicitly involved in those remarkably able historical documents—the Free Church Claim of Right of 1842, and the Protest of 1843—in which it is still bound up with the very strongest assertion of "the right and duty of the civil magistrate to maintain and support an establishment of religion in accordance with God's Word"; but in the course of the history of the Free Church the principle virtually cleared itself of this limitation and became in the hands of the great majority of the Free Church officials an anti-establishment principle, so that there remained in this connection no practical—if yet a theoretical—barrier to that union of the Free and United Presbyterian Churches which was consummated in 1900, when only a small minority of the Free Church congregations refused to enter the United Free Church. With the consistency of the minority and the inconsistency of the majority of the Free Church we are not here concerned. Our only object is to understand the principle of Spiritual Independence in its later development within the Free Church, and to appreciate its claim to be a legitimate and valid outcome and expression of the Protestant Principle of the Reformed Church of Scotland.

The principle has nowhere found abler, more

careful, or more authoritative exposition than in Sir Henry Wellwood Moncreiff's Chalmers' Lecture on "The Free Church Principle, its Character and History," and we may carry that masterly and thoroughly informed explication and defence of the principle in our view, in the remarks we here make upon it. The principle of Spiritual Independence is there expounded as the absolute right of the ecclesiastical courts of the Presbyterian Church to exercise a spiritual jurisdiction over their subjects in entire independence of the civil courts of the country, even when the exercise of that jurisdiction may involve consequences or penalties of a material or civil kind, such as the removal from a lucrative office. This absolute right is not grounded upon any arrangement or adjustment with the State, but is held to flow directly from a divine source, being derived by the ecclesiastical courts immediately from the Invisible Head of the Church. This ecclesiastical doctrine, as Sir Henry Moncreiff clearly sees—although many do not see it—manifestly involves the divine right of Presbytery, in contrast to the merely human right of the State; and when pushed to its logical consequences it would also involve for its proper authoritative working in detail the necessity of an infallible administration. There cannot, without contradiction,

be an absolute "divine right to govern wrong"; and in case of a collision with the order of the State or any other external power, when appeal is not made to that State or power, we must be absolutely certain on the highest ground of the justness of our own contention. The exclusive spiritual jurisdiction thus claimed for the Church, can hardly be called in proper language a co-ordinate jurisdiction, as there is no common embracing jurisdiction connecting the two departments; it is virtually superordinate to the civil jurisdiction from its higher institution and relation, and is indeed really heterogeneous to it. It is not included in the State as a form of jurisdiction constituted by it. Its independence being absolute and otherwise founded, it is as much outside of the positive law and administration of the State in which it may be exercised as one State is outside of another State. It is not a mere *imperium in imperio*, as occupying the sphere of a relatively independent jurisdiction conceded to it by the State; but it issues in an absolute dualism in government as affirming two entirely independent and heterogeneous powers which cannot coalesce or become unified under the common sanction of obligations.

The theory was logically worked out into two practical consequences: first, the incompatibility of

any possible form of Church establishment at present with the principle of Spiritual Independence; and secondly, the right, nevertheless, of the Church holding this principle to call upon the State to give it legal recognition within its bounds. By the former position the Free Church justified its action in joining the crusade for disestablishment, and the voluntaries carried off their once strongest opponents victoriously in their train; by the latter it adopted a standpoint almost identical with that of the Roman Church in its relation to the Protestant State, which would be entirely satisfied with public political recognition and the absolute exercise of its own exclusive spiritual jurisdiction within any such State—a striking illustration in the ecclesiastical sphere of the old maxim that extremes meet.

Taking the theory as we find it in its maturer and more developed form, we have only to consider whether it is really, as it claims to be, the historical principle of the Reformed Church of Scotland, and nothing can be more certain than that it is a one-sided, overstrained, and unpractical exaggeration of that principle.

The theory of the divine institution of an absolute, independent, exclusive jurisdiction in the present ecclesiastical courts of any Presbyterian Church, has only the most slender foundation

in one general proposition of the Westminster Confession of Faith, which, taken strictly in its terms, could be accepted both by divine-right Episcopalians and by Independents, as well as by Presbyterians, and which in its immediately following connection and purpose is rejected and repudiated by the very theorists who build such an elaborate structure upon it. Even the Act of the General Assembly approving and adopting the Westminster Confession in 1647, draws attention to the fact that "the several sorts of ecclesiastical officers and assemblies" are not mentioned in the Confession. The Presbyterian constitution of the Scottish Church rests not on the Westminster Confession, but on the old Charter of 1592, which only ratifies and approves in general terms, mostly borrowed from the Second Book of Discipline, the then existing General Assemblies, Provincial and Synodal Assemblies, Presbyteries, and Sessions. And when we turn to the Second Book of Discipline, we do not find the spiritual jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church defined in the absolutely exclusive and separatistic way alleged by recent advocates of Spiritual Independence. The ecclesiastical power and its spiritual jurisdiction are indeed clearly distinguished from the civil power of the commonwealth and its jurisdiction;

but they are declared to be both of God and "to tend to one end, if they be rightly used, namely, to advance the glory of God and to have godly and good subjects." Nay, it is distinctly laid down that "the civil power should command the spiritual to exercise and to do their office according to the Word of God"; and, further, that "the magistrate ought to assist, maintain, and fortify the jurisdiction of the Kirk." And to go back again to John Knox and the first reformers, they held no such view as the divine institution and absolute right of Presbytery, and have even formulated the contrary position in Art. XX. of the Scottish Confession. In fact the divine-right theory of Presbytery was the product of the later conflicts with Episcopacy, and it was Henderson, Gillespie, and the other leaders of the so-called Second Reformation of 1638 who elaborated it into the form in which it has been revived as the basis of the doctrine of Absolute Spiritual Independence.

But if our Presbyterian courts are merely the products of human wisdom, mere human arrangements for maintaining the comely order and furthering the spiritual purity of the Church, and if they are only governed and administered by fallible erring men, all this must be admitted in dealing with the equally fallible and erring officers

of the State. Blunders and wrongdoings are equally possible on both sides; the Church may err in its action towards the State, as the State may err in its action towards the Church. Nay, the Church may be as unjustly coercive in its dealing with the spiritual independence of the individuals under its jurisdiction, as the State in its dealing with the individuals under its jurisdiction. Who will vouch to the State that the independent spiritual jurisdiction, whose legal recognition is claimed at its hands, has been always justly exercised in the past and will be always justly exercised in the future? Admitting that the State and the civil courts have erred in particular cases, that they have even violated a constitutional pledge and encroached on the spiritual jurisdiction legally recognised in the Church; even if nothing had been done to remedy these wrongs and to guard against their recurrence, it would still be the duty of the Church not to limit the application of its Protestant Principle, but to strive by wiser administration and a better adjustment of its constitution to maintain the vantage ground of its historical position and the consistency of its traditions.

Looked at historically, then, this theory of Absolute Spiritual Independence in the Church courts is not the legitimate development of the

reforming principle of the Scottish Reformation. It is pervaded by the fallacious assumption that the visible organised forms of Scottish Presbyterianism are identical with the divine institutions of the invisible Kingdom of God. It, in fact, founds upon the ideal of the Invisible Church, which admits only of approximate realisation under the insuperable limitations of the historical development. There was therefore great truth in the remark of Dr. Chalmers, that he could hardly conceive of a Church being re-established in accordance with this principle until the millennium. But neither do self-constituted offshoots of the Church attain millennial perfection by merely rushing out of the Establishment, nor do they escape from the danger of civil coercion by throwing away such protection as they may find therein; rather do they expose themselves to such coercion in a more aggravated and defenceless form. The principle of Spiritual Independence cannot be safely fenced, in a non-established Church, either by private legal contract—surely its lowest possible guarantee—or by any amount of strategetic calculation and ingenuity on the part of its leaders.

Nor is it easy to see how, if the principle could be safeguarded in such ways, it can be really held to be the distinctive principle of an

organised Church at all. Strictly taken, it expresses merely a negative relation to the State, and a negative relation can hardly be viewed as an inner, vital, organising principle. Certainly, it is no improvement on the established technical formula of the spiritual jurisdiction of the Church, nor is it a relevant and equivalent expression for the Protestant principle of the self-purification of the Church. From the days of John Knox till now the Church of Scotland has regarded the principle of its spiritual jurisdiction as flowing ultimately from its Invisible Head, as maintained in its administration by the "mutual consent" of its members, and as protected in the exercise of its courts by its compact with the State; and it has striven to obtain from the State from time to time all possible facilities and means for its execution. It is hardly possible to conceive of a more practical, a more efficient, a more secure, or a more catholic view of the spiritual jurisdiction of the Church. And it is undoubtedly grounded upon the genuine, historical, Protestant standpoint.

CHAPTER IV.

The Theological Principle of the Reformed Theology.

The Theology of the Reformed Church is fundamentally characterised above all other systems of positive Christian theology by the resoluteness with which it carries back religious faith to its ultimate basis in God, and by the directness with which it connects the idea of God with every relation and activity of human life. It applies the Protestant Principle to the scientific reform of theology with the same purity and thoroughness as to the practical reformation of the Church. The purified theology is the accompaniment of the purified Church; the two go hand in hand and mutually condition each other; and they show in their different forms the same producing principle and the same characteristic issues. As in the reform of the Christian life of the Church, so in the reform of its Christian theology, everything pagan, adventitious, merely human has to be rigorously and resolutely removed from the

pathway of the soul in its return to the living personal God, as revealed to it in all His own righteousness and mercy and love in Christ Jesus. Neither pagan philosophy, although it may come with the ideal sublimity of Plato, the logical completeness of Aristotle, or the lofty self-denial of the Stoics, nor the authority of Pope, Council, or Church Father, and still less that of biblical critic or scholar, however learned and earnest, shall now determine the truth of God and the saving faith of the human soul. Saving faith must again rest directly upon God alone. It is only the infallible testimony of His Holy Spirit that can now be recognised as authenticating divine eternal truth in the purified and enlightened consciousness of the Christian believer. All truth is consciously carried back to God through the direct recognition of His self-manifestation in the world and His self-revelation in history; and theology is the science of that truth as thus recognised again in the Christian Church. Theology, as its name properly indicates, is nothing but the science of God. God, in His living reality and relation to man, is its supreme and only proper object, its beginning, its middle, and its end. Theological science is distinguished in this from all other sciences and learnings, which have to do properly and directly with God's

world and works, and only indirectly through them with God Himself. It approaches God directly, receives its knowledge of Him from His own self-communication, and in and through that knowledge knows the world and man. This is the fundamental attitude of the Theology of the Reformed Church; but it carries with it the historical standpoint of the Church, and is thereby distinguished from a merely intuitional or speculative as well as from a merely inductive or analytical theology. About the existence of God it has no doubt whatever; for this is to it a self-evident truth, a primary axiom, an unquestionable fact of the self-consciousness in which it is revealed; the foundation truth of all truth without which it knows no truth whatever; the universal and necessary certainty without which there neither is nor can be any certainty at all. The Reformed Theology is thus based upon innate and inalienable knowledge of God. It does not come to that knowledge as the last result of long weary doubt and learned search. It is its sure possession from the first, the immediateness and certainty of it being the first material article of all its creeds and the characteristic mark of all its thinking.

There has perhaps never been an age — and certainly there has been no age since the

Reformation — that so urgently and so deeply needed such a theology as this age of ours. The theology of our day has largely drifted away from the immediate certainty of God into a chaos of mere human discussion and controversy, and is consequently becoming increasingly full of perplexity and confusion. In particular, the new Biblical Criticism has largely lost the central vision of God and become little more than a conflict between an old dogmatic externality and a novel historical criticism, in which the student is tossed to and fro by German critics who often seem only to rival each other in the promulgation of ingenious and startling paradoxes. Not in this way, nor as the result of such a process — however necessary it may be in its own domain — is vital saving faith in God to be regained and restored. We must go deeper than this, and even behind all this, if we are to find the source of all being, the creator and saviour of souls. It is only by recovering the standpoint of the founders of the Reformed Theology that we shall overcome the theological scepticism, distraction, and despair of our age, and anchor the soul immovably again in the eternal strength and security and peace of God.

But it will be said that all the systems of theology—Roman, Lutheran, and Socinian—nay,

even all the pagan religions from the lowest fetichism of barbarous tribes up to the impersonal dream of the Hindu mystic, seek to go back to God, and contain each in its own way a theological principle. Even admitting this, the final question in the logic of theology is, however, the special value of these theological principles, and the right of one of them to supersede all the others and crown the theological development by unfolding the true method of rising to the knowledge of God. Hence the question we have now specially to deal with is just this: How does the Reformed Theology in particular go back to God? What is distinctive in its method of demonstration? Wherein lies the superiority claimed for it as a solution of the theological question for our time? In other words, we have to determine the distinctive essence and character of the Theological Principle of the Reformed Theology, the principle which at once generates and gives a special complexion and colouring to all the doctrinal details of the system, the principle which gives unity to all its theological variations and all the diversities of its forms and modes of expression.

In approaching the discussion we cannot overlook the fact that the Reformed Church has been said to have no special theological principle at

all. While the Lutheran Church has a distinct material principle in its supreme doctrine of justification by faith alone, the Reformed Church, it has been alleged, is not characterised by any other similar fundamental principle; and the particular divergences of the Reformed from the Lutheran system are only accidental variations that have arisen from the different degrees in which the formal scriptural principle has been held and applied. But this view is evidently superficial, and inadequate to explain the Reformed system. The prolonged doctrinal controversies that have been carried on between the Lutheran and the Reformed theologians have always brought to light the existence of differences between them more fundamental and general. Luther himself held obstinately to the existence of "another spirit" in Zwingli and his associates, as the ground of the impossibility of agreement or compromise regarding his fundamental doctrines of the Eucharist and the ubiquity of Christ's Body; and the whole cast of the Reformed Theology—its logical severity, organic connection, and scientific unity—points even more clearly to the presence and working of a special inner principle of its own.

It need occasion no surprise that the sense for distinctive principles manifested itself only after

the bitter dogmatic controversies had worked themselves out. It is always thus in the order of history. It is only after conflict over particular questions and the exhaustion of the quick energies it calls forth, that the consciousness of the underlying principle at stake works itself clear, in view of the results achieved by the struggle and with the calmer reflection of a later and soberer time. And it was not until the nineteenth century, the century of scientific reflection and formulation of historical principles, that the discussion of the distinctive theological or material principle of the Reformed Church took its rise and was carried forward to something like a definite issue.

The simplest and most instructive way of approaching that issue will be by briefly passing in review the more important attempts that have been made to formulate the principle.

1. We need hardly linger over the narrow individualistic view which finds the Reformed type of doctrine explained by the *peculiar character and idiosyncrasies* of the founders of the Reformed Theology. This theory is advanced by Planck, Ullmann, and others. Zwingli, it is said, was more a man of intellect and of the understanding, while Luther was more a man of sentiment and of the heart; and these predominating characteristics of their individualities

determined the respective tendencies of the systems they founded. This view, although supported by many ingenious parallels between the outstanding qualities of each reformer and the nature of his reforming work, is evidently too narrow to account for fundamental differences. The peculiar character and temperament of Luther did indeed impress themselves most deeply and permanently on the Lutheran Church, which has been proud, notwithstanding his own protest, to be called by his name; but this holds in a far less degree of the leaders of the Reformed Church, which has refused to be designated by any of their names, or bound by any of their opinions, or judged and tested by any principles other than the essential principles of an historically Reformed Church. Moreover, none of the Reformed theologians formulated any doctrine by reference to any peculiar relation of his own, as was the habit of the impassioned reformer of Germany. Every one of them, sinking his individuality in his work, found his strength only in the objective truth of Scripture, or the principle of life that Scripture revealed in his purified and elevated consciousness of God.

2. Hardly more importance is to be assigned to the view that derives the characteristic difference of the Reformed Theology from the *special culture and training*, or—in a word—the *humanism* of

its founders. This view has been advocated by Weber, Göbel, and others. It is also quite inadequate. Zwingli and Calvin were profoundly versed in the literature, philosophy, rhetoric, and poetry of ancient Greece and Rome; so that Zwingli could even pause in the midst of his momentous work to unsphere the spirit of Plato, and to edit a friend's work on the poetry of Pindar; while Calvin, at the age of twenty-four, delighted the polished scholars of his time by his elegant commentary on the grave moral wisdom of Seneca. It is also true that the centres of the Reformation in Switzerland and France had been long the seats of outshoots of the Roman civilisation, and haunts of the learned leisure of the mediæval Church; while the forests and mines of Saxony and eastern Germany were still possessed by the ancient simplicity and the primitive rudeness of the old Germanic life. But these facts do not account for the profounder theology of the Reformed Church and the peculiar independence of the new spirit that found its home there. Least of all do they account for the insight and completeness with which the work of reform was carried through in Holland and Scotland, where the conditions indicated had as yet but very limited and exceptional influence. Had the spirit of humanism been the generating

factor in the Reformed Church, Erasmus, the greatest of the humanists, would have been the reformer of Holland, and George Buchanan, the most classical Latinist of his age, would have been the reformer of Scotland. But the comparative scorn or indifference with which such great masters of the ancient learning regarded the new movement, is the most convincing proof that it derived its mighty power from a higher source. It is true, indeed, that the Reformed Church owed much to the classical learning and culture of Zwingli and Calvin, both in the completeness of its emancipation from the mediæval corruptions of Romanism and in the thoroughly systematic exposition of its polemical and didactic theology, as well as in its immediate equipment, through their example and work, with all the resources of biblical and exegetical science; but, after all, the humanistic element belonged rather to the form of its theology than to its matter, and is utterly inadequate to explain the originality, depth, and fertility of its essential principles.

3. Equally external, and even more unsatisfactory, is the view that has found the explanation of the peculiarity of the Reformed type of doctrine in the *democratic spirit* of its original founders, and the *republican constitution* of the Swiss cantons in which it arose. Even so excel-

lent an historian of the Christian dogmas as Baumgarten-Crusius explains the specific difference on this ground. "The German Reformation," he says, "proceeded more from the people, the Swiss Reformation more from the local governments; and hence the former had from the beginning more the character of feeling and phantasy, while the latter was more characterised by intellect and reflection." But this view manifestly does not penetrate into the heart of the Swiss movement; and, at the most, is only applicable to the external arrangements under which the movement proceeded, or to the ecclesiastical form of constitution in which it embodied itself. It is not applicable to the historical circumstances of France, or the Netherlands, or Scotland; and it rather indicates a tendency or consequence than a primary essential factor common to the whole system. It does not explain the greater subordination of the German Reformation to the power of the State, nor the peculiar doctrinal modifications of the two systems; and it leaves entirely out of view the fact that in the Swiss cantons, as well as in Scotland, the movement of reform originated within the Church, and effected itself by laying hold of the people, by whose leaders its power was brought to bear upon the governments.

4. More importance might be laid upon the contention of many of the Lutheran theologians that, as the Reformed difference arose from a pronounced freedom in the interpretation of the eucharistic text, so the character of the system was determined generally by the *free scope given to reason* in its attitude towards Scripture. The Reformed theologians, it is said, conceded too much to reason, allowing it to decide all disputed questions regarding the contents of Scripture and the mysteries of the faith. This view is maintained by those who hold that the Reformed system of theology was from the first a veiled or implicit rationalism, and subordinated the religion of revelation to the arbitrary dictates of mere private judgment. We have already referred to the view in connection with our discussion of the principle of Protestantism, and we need only indicate further the way in which the Reformed theologians themselves dealt with it. They frankly admitted that reason must be applied to all the departments of truth to which, by the nature of things, it can be applied; yet it was not to be used as the determining authority in spheres to which its right does not extend. Its use, when applied to the matter of Revelation, is merely that of an intellectual instrument, like the function of the eye in discerning the light of the sun and

the objects thereby revealed. It does not produce nor create the higher mysteries of the faith. On the other hand, the Reformed theologians turned the argument against the Lutherans by charging them with making use of an unreal, fantastic, speculative reason, which pretended to find things in Scripture which were not really there, and construed them as objects of faith in direct contradiction to the plainest common sense and all the conditions of credibility. It is therefore manifest that the mere difference in the degree or form in which the faculty of reason, as variously understood and defined, is applied to Scripture, cannot account for the more substantial difference which determined the respective characteristics of the Lutheran and Reformed types of doctrine.

Nor is the modification of this view, that finds the distinguishing difference to be in the greater *importance of tradition* in the Lutheran attitude towards Scripture, a sufficient elucidation of what is really at issue. The historian Ranke expresses the distinction in his own clear and vigorous way in these terms. "The Lutheran doctrine," he says, "is only a last form of the Latin Christianity, a last spiritualised and purified member in the western tradition, produced by a return to Scripture; whereas the Reformed doctrine, breaking entirely away from tradition, is conscious of itself

as immediately created anew out of the Scripture." This view undoubtedly contains much truth. It does express a characteristic distinction between the two types of doctrine. It accounts at once for the hesitating and incomplete movement of reform at certain cardinal points in the Lutheran system, and for the more complete and thoroughgoing emancipation from the mediæval traditionalism in the Reformed Church. But even with this important distinction we are not carried beyond the respective modifications presented in the two systems of the formal principle of Protestantism. We must pursue the distinction to a more internal and originative point in order to reach the real vitality and strength of the essential principle of the Reformed Theology.

5. The views we have been glancing at were in fact only so many attempts to guess out the characteristic principle of the Theology of the Reformed Church, so many tentative gropings and searchings — the conjectures of ingenious thinkers inadequately acquainted with the conditions of the problem, rather than scientific conclusions derived from a full and exhaustive examination of the available material. But they quickened and sustained a scientific interest in the question, and led the way to the more profound and satisfactory discussions which arose

in Switzerland some sixty years ago. Alexander Schweizer of Zurich, the inaugurator of the more scientific method, after reviewing the tentative and superficial theories we have been noticing, takes up, as we have already seen, the Protestant formula suggested by Herzog, that while the Lutheran Reformation protested against the Jewish corruptions of the mediæval Church arising from a relapse into the practice of a Pelagian righteousness by works, the Reformed Church directed its protest against the pagan elements in the mediæval Church occasioned by a relapse into the idolatry of the creature with the consequent obscuration of the glory of God; and this difference in the Protestant Principle he carried into a formulation of the positive Theological Principle of the Reformed system. As he represents it, the purifying Protestant Principle of the Reformed Church, purging away the pagan obscuration of the Christian consciousness of God, restores and renovates the pure primitive Christian faith, and brings the soul again into immediate relation with God in the sense of its absolute dependence on Him alone for salvation; and in the process of salvation the soul is continually determined by the living Spirit of God acting directly upon it and making it the subject of the highest manifestation of His glory. The

Theological Principle of the Reformed Church is, then, according to Schweizer, the consciousness or feeling of the *absolute dependence of man upon God alone* in all that pertains to his religious life and to the salvation of his soul. This principle is clearly distinguished from the Lutheran principle of *justification by faith alone* in that it is theological rather than anthropological, carrying faith out of a mere state or act of the human soul—albeit so pure and spiritual an act as that of justifying faith—and bringing God at once before the soul in the immediate presentment of His own absoluteness in the outgoing of His free determining energy, to which alone the creature owes its being, and on which it is continually and absolutely dependent for all that it is or may become.

The principle, as thus expressed, evidently goes to the root of the whole reform carried out by the leaders of the Reformed Church. It clearly accounts for their impatience, and even intolerance, of all finite creaturely things and institutions set up between man and the absolute course of the religious life, so as to condition or modify or arrest the living outflow of divine saving power into the believing soul; and it furnishes a distinct criterion by which the things of God are to be distinguished from the things of man, by which divine truth may be discriminated from human illusion

and superstition, and by which the dependent soul may be enabled to find peace and strength and the assurance of eternal reality amid the fluctuation and change and uncertainty of the phenomenal and the finite. This Schweizer has at least indicated, if not overtly expressed; and he has authenticated his view by a profound and erudite exposition of the whole system of the Reformed Theology, which he has exhibited as naturally arising out of the vital movement of the principle of absolute dependence, and as conditioned by it in all its structure and details. He also verifies the principle by reference to the fundamental controversies between the Lutheran and the Reformed theologians regarding the Eucharist, the Person of Christ, and the doctrine of predestination. Especially does he show that while Lutheran Protestantism protested against the Judaising righteousness by works, it asked the question, What is it in man that wins salvation? and gave the answer, Not works, but faith; whereas the Reformed Protestantism asked, Who is it that saves, the creature or God? and answered, God alone, salvation being consciously referred to its ultimate source in the foreordaining and determining will of God.

6. Schweizer's profound and instructive discussion undoubtedly carried the question into the

very heart of the religious faith and system. It called forth a series of interesting and valuable contributions to the solution of the problem. Chief among these was the review of Ferdinand Christian Baur, the most powerful and original Lutheran historian of the Church since Neander. Baur readily acknowledges the value and originality of Schweizer's exposition. But, as previously remarked, he cannot agree with the historical side of his principle. He holds that protestation against the paganism of the Roman Church was a characteristic of Luther's work also, especially from the time when the German reformer wrote against the idol at Halle. In his reply, Schweizer has well vindicated his position by reminding Baur that the protest of the Reformed Church was directed originally against the Roman Church and not against the peculiarities of the Lutheran Church, and that the anti-idolatrous protestation was not claimed as the exclusive mark of the Reformed movement, but only as its predominating and determining characteristic. Baur concedes more importance to Schweizer's positive formulation of the Theological Principle, as consisting in the feeling of absolute dependence on God alone for salvation. Acutely and rightly, however, does he object to the mode in which the principle is formulated, as expressing what is really a sub-

jective or anthropological state, a mere determination of man as finite subject in his relation to the absolute being of God. But he agrees with Schweizer that the Reformed system begins with God, and proceeds from above downward to man; while the Lutheran system takes the converse way, starting from man and going back to God. The Reformed principle, as it is thus specifically theological and objective, must be formulated, he argues, in an objectively theological way. He finds such an objectively theological expression in the idea of the absoluteness of God; and he formulates the essential principle of the Reformed Theology as the idea of the *absolute causality of God*, as the one and only principle that determines and causes all things absolutely and unconditionally, by and of itself.

Baur proceeds to show that this idea of the one supreme power of God as the absolute causality that immediately produces all things, involves the Reformed doctrine of predestination. This he regards as the substantial kernel of the Reformed system, according to which the nature of God is represented as an absolute will, constituted by absolute decrees which are necessarily realised by the divine causality according to an inflexible order in time. The influence of the absolute idea of God on the Reformed system is

also shown by its reduction of the sacraments to the secondary position of mere signs and seals, and in no respect independent causes in the effectuation of salvation. In like manner, that influence is shown in the Reformed doctrine of the Person of Christ. According to Baur, the Reformed doctrine issues in no real incarnation of the Logos, but merely in an act of divine self-manifestation and self-limitation; so that there is no real union of God and man presented in the Person of Christ, nor of the infinite with the finite, the latter terms in these two formulæ being nothing more than negative aspects of the former.

Then Baur goes on to criticise Schweizer's claim for the superiority of the Reformed system of theology over the Lutheran, grounded on the allegation that it is the more thoroughgoing and consistent outcarrying of the Protestant Principle. He repudiates the Reformed claim, and defends the Lutheran system as being in reality the true historical expression of the principle of Protestantism. He does so mainly by reviving the old objections to the determinism of the Reformed system, and asserting for Lutheranism the superior excellence of carrying out the principle of freedom, which he regards as the essential characteristic of the Reformation. In the Reformed system the free subjectivity of the individual

vanishes before what Baur strikingly designates "the consuming omnipotence of the absolute causality"; but in Lutheranism — especially in the modified form given to it by Melanchthon—the free-will of man is maintained as a subjective reality in the experience of salvation, and as conditioning the realisation of the divine idea or decree in the historical process, and is so far a relatively independent entity in itself and an object presented to the consciousness and will of God. In the Lutheran system the personal salvation of the individual, says Baur, is in this way always kept directly in view, whereas in the Reformed system the result of the whole process is a mere display of the glory of God. Yet he admits that there is a genuine religious interest in the fundamental tendency of the Reformed system; and he exonerates it from the common objection that it is pantheistic in its fundamental character, pointing out that it does not represent the essence of God as being merely the universal substance. In so far, however, as the freedom of self-determination disappears from the Reformed system, and in so far as the finite generally is reduced to absolute insignificance in it, he holds that there is no real ground laid in it for the realisation of a positive unity of the divine and the human, of the infinite and the finite, as two

really distinct factors in the religious process; nor is there even discoverable in it any intelligible ground for the realisation of any idea at all through an historical process. He concludes that the Lutheran Protestantism, since it maintains the original subjective interest from which the Reformation proceeded, is the logical and natural unfolding of Protestantism; and, indeed, that the Lutheran Protestantism alone has a principle of inner movement and life in accordance with the substantial idea of Christianity.

Schweizer did not hesitate to take up the points advanced by Baur against the Reformed system and in favour of the Lutheran system. In particular, he shows that Baur failed to reach the vital centre of the Reformed system in the abstract universal terms by which he describes it; and that the oppositions of objective and subjective, and of infinite and finite, refer rather to those ontological questions which Calvin repudiates as "intellectual ingenuities" and "frigid speculations" that do not affect the vital interests of religion. All religion, as Schweizer rightly holds, lies in the relation of man to God, and theology is the intellectual expression of this relation, but not the relation itself. The fact that anthropology is so largely cultivated, although in subordination to theology proper, in

the Reformed system, is of itself an indication that the human process is recognised to have a certain reality before God. Schweizer further dwells upon the fact that the interest in salvation is equally exemplified in both systems and prosecuted with the same zeal, although from different standpoints. The emphatic exclusion from the Reformed system of creaturely participation in the procuring of salvation, shows the relative position actually assigned to the human element; while the practical interest in the individual realisation of the pure religious life is also urged victoriously by Schweizer against Baur's representation that it tends to disappear or be annihilated in presence of the consciousness of the all-determining causality of God.

7. The respective limitations of the formulæ of Schweizer and Baur were pointed out in acute criticisms by Schneckenburger of Berne, a distinguished theologian of the Reformed Church. Taking his standpoint on the practical interest that produced the Reformation, namely, the felt need of a more certain and direct assurance of salvation than the corrupted Roman Church could furnish, Schneckenburger holds that the two branches of the Protestant Church proceeded from the same religious interest, their difference resting only upon a different ethical and religious

conception of the Christian life. Each of the two Protestant confessions has its own religious psychology, its own peculiar mode of viewing the inner process of salvation; and in consequence both are at root anthropological, yet in different ways. Both find the satisfaction of the individual religious need in a special way of realising the certainty of salvation. This way consists in the subjective process of faith. But while the Lutheran Church is content to rest in the sense of justification before God through faith in the Christian revelation of grace, the Reformed Church goes behind the subjective process to find the ultimate ground of salvation in the electing and determining will of God.

Schneckenburger illustrates this position by a lucid reference to the distinguishing points in the respective views advocated by the Lutheran and the Reformed theologians regarding the Lord's Supper, the Person of Christ, and the doctrine of predestination. With regard to the last, he maintains, as against both Schweizer and Baur, that the views held in the Reformed Church did not arise as a logical deduction or consequence from the idea of the absolute determination or causality of God, but rather by a regressive inference or ultimate reference to God as the supreme and only source of salvation. Equally important is

his vindication of the Reformed view regarding the fulness of the divine nature and its real relations in history, against Baur's narrow abstract formula that reduces it under the one hard and general category of unconditioned causality. The Reformed theologians did recognise the existence and movement of a real process of life both in the divine nature and in human history. The glorifying of the Son by the Father and of the Father by the Son, is the basis of an historical development which presupposes distinct finite subjects as the self-conscious bearers of that glorification. The subjects of the historical process can only attain to the perception and fruition of the divine nature by having their consciousness raised above the natural movement of finite life. This is effected through election on the side of God. Hence God is glorified through finite beings in their knowledge of Himself and of His electing grace; for the beings thus personally knowing and enjoying Him become so many finite mirrors of His absolute glory. The producing and attaining of this knowledge, with its embodiment in the religious life and consciousness of finite personalities, are the very purpose and end of the process of creation and of the providence of universal history. God communicates Himself to the redeemed personalities who crown

the order of His creation. He enters into fellowship with them, and plants an eternal endless life in the soil of their finite nature. The religious interest of the individual thus leads back to the doctrine of divine predestination, and finds its final guarantee and certainty in the consciousness of his eternal election in the purpose of God.

No system, says Schneckenburger, has pressed so strenuously and so clearly into the ultimate ground of the assurance of salvation in God as that of the Reformed Church. The Reformed system shows in this a theoretical superiority to the Lutheran system, although the Lutheran system has, it is admitted, grasped the fact of the religious subjectivity in a fuller and deeper way. While the Reformed system has accentuated more emphatically the opposition of the finite and the infinite, and has sought to reconcile them by the absolute subordination of the finite to the infinite, the Lutheran system has tended more to exhibit the immanence of the infinite in the finite, and to find the resolution of the antithesis in the divine-human consciousness of the subject. But the two systems are none the less fundamentally one. The subjective need of salvation constitutes their common starting-point and fundamental characteristic, not only in their opposition to Romanism, but in their common striving towards a new form of religious

communion with God, and its exhibition in a new religious fellowship of humanity.

8. Schneckenburger, while thus acutely defining their relations, does not attempt to formulate a distinct Theological Principle either for the Lutheran or for the Reformed Church, as this would be inconsistent with his view of their essential identity; but he has carried the position to some extent in advance of the views of Schweizer and Baur by showing the inadequacy of their respective formulæ to cover the depth, flexibility, and richness of the Reformed conception of God. His own view of the anthropological character of the Reformed system is, however, one-sided in its turn, and so far Schweizer and Baur have right on their side in maintaining the essentially theological character of the system. Nevertheless, Schweizer's formula of the absolute dependence of man upon God is not only anthropological in its mode of expression, as Baur has pointed out, but also suffers from another objection, in that it limits the implied conception of God to the human relation, which the genuine Theology of the Reformed Church has always transcended. The formula is in fact taken in its very terms from Schleiermacher, who specially accentuated the feeling of absolute dependence as the radical and essential element of

the religious consciousness. It is true that in this remarkable and most valuable definition of religion, and even to some extent in his psychological analysis of the religious consciousness, Schleiermacher was not so original as is generally supposed; and Schweizer, while paying all due homage to him, has no difficulty in drawing from the rich resources of his own special learning various descriptions and definitions of religion given by some of the old theologians—such as Stapfer—which are almost identical in phraseology with his own and Schleiermacher's form. Yet after all, this form never was, nor could be predominantly characteristic of the Reformed Theology.

Baur's formula of the absolute causality of God, apart from its abstract ontological expression, accords better with the objective theological character of the terminology of the system. Various efforts have therefore been made to formulate the principle in question in closer accordance with the technical form of the dogmatic tradition, while at the same time avoiding the abstractness and limitation of Baur's formula. For one of the best of these we must go to Holland. Jan Hendrik Scholten of Leyden, in view of all the discussions we have been referring to, has formulated the Theological Prin-

ciple of the Reformed Theology in more definite and familiar terms, as being the recognition of *God's absolute sovereignty in the natural and moral worlds, and especially the absolute sovereignty of His free grace* as the only ground of human salvation.

In vindicating the relevancy and sufficiency of this formula Scholten has given good reasons for repudiating, with Schneckenburger, Schweizer's view that the Reformed system proceeds in its theology with an imperfect anthropology. For although, in the light of the later development, the old anthropology may well be regarded as now inadequate, yet for the possibility of its time the old system did not fall short of the anthropological development even of Lutheranism. The Reformed Church was from the outset distinguished by the care and fidelity with which it devoted itself to the cultivation of the moral life. It showed its intense moral earnestness in putting the corruption and sinfulness of human nature in the foreground of its doctrine of election. And it was the first to cultivate Christian Ethics as a theological science. A further confirmation of its interest in anthropology is found in the tendency of the public Confessions of the Church to infra-lapsarianism, showing that the moral condition of man was

regarded as the starting-point in thought of the eternal decree of election to grace.

Here it will be said that if this principle of the divine sovereignty is the last result of the application of scientific inquiry to the Reformed Theology, it is after all but an old and familiar idea, in fact the best worn commonplace of our popular evangelical Scottish Theology. Admitting such to be the case, the principle in question may nevertheless be the latest result of scientific theology. That it is also essentially identical with our own traditional view could be abundantly shown by reference to the standard works of our theological literature, which is all founded upon and pervaded by this very recognition of God's sovereignty, especially in the exercise of His saving grace. And it is just on this account that I have been anxious to approach it through these recent discussions in the most scientific theology of our time, and especially through the unbiassed historical investigations of the most advanced, and even the most rationalistic of modern scientific theologians. The result we have reached is thus so far safe from historical or sceptical criticism, in that it comes to us authenticated as the very product of such criticism. We may accept and hold it with confidence as by no means an unreasoned expression of a popular prejudice or an

unscientific tradition. And we may proceed to estimate the living value of the principle with new insight and a quickened appreciation.

9. Undoubtedly the principle of the sovereignty of God is the ruling conception of the Theology of the Reformed Church. But we are met on many sides with the allegation that it is an imperfect principle, and ought to be now superseded by the doctrine of the love of God—of the divine Fatherhood. The advocates of this view continually contrast the sovereignty and the love of God, as if they were incompatible with each other; and they do not hesitate even to discard the conception of the divine sovereignty as something different from and beneath the idea of the divine love in the Christian revelation. This view has received its most vigorous exposition in the Lutheran Church in the Theology of Ritschl, the dominating theology of the hour in Germany. It is a view, too, that is finding many strong advocates among ourselves.

But the view is narrow and limited, and, although not inconsistent with the Lutheran system, entirely alien to the universal and comprehensive Theology of the Reformed Church. The love of God is not to be taken apart from the other equally essential attributes of the divine nature. Any attempt to do so cannot

but issue in a one-sided and imperfect representation of the divine being and character. Indeed, the Ritschlian separation of theology from the spheres of science and philosophy limits our knowledge of God at the very outset, by excluding it from the spheres where, as we believe, it can be most directly verified and enlarged; and to build a theology out of the elements of revelation only, without laying its basis in natural theology and rational theism, is to build in the air. The great strength of the Reformed Theology lies, in truth, in its deep apprehension of the sovereignty of God as manifested not only in the soul of man, but everywhere throughout the universe, from its centre to its circumference, in its least as in its greatest parts, in its atoms and in its star-systems —in short, wherever law and order and even the merest speck of existence are presented; so that we cannot find ourselves (nor even conceive of ourselves as being) anywhere in the universe where God does not reign. The universality of law is but the name which modern science gives to what the Reformed theologians call, in their language, the sovereignty of God in the natural and moral worlds. As Richard Hooker has so grandly said, "Of Law there can be no less acknowledged, than that her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world."

While asserting the universal sovereignty of God in the natural and moral worlds as the only sure and immovable basis of the theological system, the Reformed theologians do not repudiate the idea of the love of God, but give it only a deeper foundation and a clearer intelligibility by making it the crown and consummation of the divine sovereignty in its widest range. In their view, to separate the divine love from the divine sovereignty is to rob the divine love of its strength, to reduce it to a mere reflex of human emotion, a mere anthropomorphic habit or idea, and to make it but an incident, or accident, or even a new unrelated perplexity in the system of the universe. The divine love is only the perfection of the divine sovereignty, the perfect consummation of the divine purpose disclosed at last in God's completion of the world by His self-communication to immortal souls. The mystery of all the apparent harshness of the divine sovereignty in its natural operation in the lower spheres is illumined when we think of the divine sovereignty therein manifested as an implicit undisclosed love, requiring the whole wide order of the universe for its unfolding and realisation. The Reformed Theology knows no dualism in the divine nature, no inseparable gulf between God's sovereignty and God's love. His love, as the communica-

tion of Himself to redeemed souls, is the divine immortal flower which blooms out of the whole of His work of creation and providence and grace, and has its deep-hidden root in the very adamantine rocks of the primal creation.

10. The sovereignty of God in the natural and moral worlds, and especially in the exercise of His free grace, is then, when rightly understood as identical at its highest stage with the divine love, still a valid principle in view of the theological requirements of our time. It needs, however, and can easily receive, a certain internal development in the light of our deepened and widened knowledge of God's mode of working and ruling in His universe as a whole. The conception of the divine sovereignty, universally true and applicable as it is, is yet too external and formal in itself to be an adequate and sufficient expression for God's way of realising His eternal purpose. The fundamental idea of the Reformed Theology is that the world in all its parts and processes and stages and forms of life, is the outcarrying in time of one divine plan, conceived in the eternal reason of the Godhead and realised by creative power and wisdom and love. This is really the fundamental principle of the Reformed Theology by which all the variety and multiplicity of being are reduced to unity, and by which the order of

the world—notwithstanding its apparent imperfection at any particular moment of time or in any particular point of space—is reconciled with the absolute and infinite perfection of God. The dominant idea of the Reformed system is therefore the relation of the divine purpose in eternity to its execution in time; and its point of view is universally purposive or teleological. God is not the mere sovereign or ruler of the world, governing it only from without by certain general laws; He is its creator, its sustainer, its director, its completer; He constitutes its order, maintains it in operation, and elevates it from stage to stage through all the manifold forms of being and life, crowning the whole by realising in man the perfect product which consciously brings the development of the whole system again into unity with Himself. There is, ultimately, no other source of being, movement, life, will, thought, or love in the world but God alone; and the world has no existence or reality in itself apart from Him. However independent it may seem, it is nevertheless absolutely dependent upon Him alone for its existence and power, and it can only have that existence and exercise that power of, in, and by Him.

The Theological Principle of the Reformed Theology, when thus interpreted in the light of

contemporary knowledge, is the completest theism, the profoundest optimism, and the most real spiritualism that can be conceived. To it God is the first and last term of all things, the alpha and omega of existence; and the world is embraced in the infinity of God as an absolutely dependent system of finite teleological *panentheism*, to use Krause's term expressive of the idea that all things live, move, and have their being in God. According to this fundamental conception of the Reformed Theology the whole visible and real world exists only to manifest the glory of God, as at once the cause of its being, the reason of its development, and the end of its destiny. The world, including man, has in other words been brought into being as a means for the finite self-manifestation and self-revelation of the infinite and absolute God. It is only when we extend the definition of the essential principle of the Reformed Theology to this comprehensiveness that we do justice to it, and reach the universal basis upon which its crowning and consummating doctrine of grace is so deeply and so immovably laid. We must then never lose sight of the fundamental conception that the manifestation of His glory in all the spheres of His creation is the chief end God has in view, and that even the salvation of man is but a part of His mighty and

marvellous work; so that the idea of His sovereignty in the exercise of His saving grace receives at length its true and scientific expression when it is comprehended as a constituent and completing manifestation of His universal sovereignty in the world as a whole. And, therefore, I would prefer still to keep to the formula of the old theologians in their grand and all-comprehensive expression, generally inscribed on the front of their systems, and—on its anthropological side at least—contained in the answer to the first question of our Shorter Catechism, according to which the manifestation of God and of His glory and the enjoyment by man of participation in His blessedness, constitute the ground and end of the existence of all things.

The Reformed Theology exhibits this truth as realised at its highest through the practical struggle of the soul with itself and with the world in the search for salvation. It lays the chief accent upon the divine part in the saving process, and sums up all the elements in the new-quickened consciousness of God in the one word, grace. This old familiar word is the last, culminating expression of the consciousness of the divine activity in the world; and it is not to be wondered at if the deep and essential connections of sovereign grace with the lower natural

world and with the common ongoings of life, are often forgotten or ignored, with the result that it too often appears under the aspect of an isolated, exceptional, unrelated mystery that can give no intelligible account of itself. In this common unrelatedness and dualism of the consciousness of grace we have indeed the root and explanation of most of the narrowness, limitation, and repellency of the popular theology, and the cause of its own practical weakness and isolation. But whoever understands the word, grace, in its connection with God's universal manifestation and revelation of Himself in the world—or in all its length and breadth and depth and height—comprehends in principle the whole system of the Reformed Theology.

11. Reserving the further illustration and proof of the Theological Principle of the Reformed Theology as thus rendered, we conclude this general statement of the principle by indicating its harmony with all that is highest and best in the contemporary movements of science, philosophy, and religion.

(1) Its essential harmony with the principles of modern *science* hardly requires elucidation in detail. The general standpoint of modern science may be said to be an application in the sphere of science of the Protestant Principle of the Re-

formed Church; Bacon's *Novum Organum* is, in a manner, an application to the natural world of the principle which rules Calvin's Institutes. By its clear apprehension of the nature of the physical world as the created product of the eternal God, and consequently distinct from His personality while absolutely dependent on His power, the Protestant Principle cleared itself of the mysticism of the Italian thinkers, purified the finite world from the superstitious phantasms and terrors of the early naturalistic religions as well as from the confusion and vagueness of speculative pantheism, and gave it over to the investigation and research of science as a world of rational structure and order, and a store-house of divine bounty and provision for the good of man. In the Reformed thinking the principle took the speculative form of the axiom, *finitum non est capax infiniti*, by which nature was permanently distinguished from God, while embraced in Him. In consequence, the weird superstitious night of the Middle Ages passed away in the clear rising of the sunlit modern world of science. The later forms of naturalistic speculation that have identified the infinite with the finite, or merged God in nature and given Him only a self-consciousness in man, have found their home in the Lutheran mysticism, but have been always foreign to the clear theistic

thought of the Reformed Church. The Reformed Theology, rightly understood, has had no controversy with the principle of modern science, nor any terror in presence of its advance, as that principle has been only a confirmation of its own principle, in the sphere of the natural and moral worlds. It has always repudiated the idea of the immanence of the divine personality in nature, while all the more strongly holding the immanence of His omnipresent power and purpose. The principle of the Reformed Theology is thoroughly and confidently scientific; for no theory of evolution is intelligible without its inherent idea of purpose; no true interpretation of the laws of finite phenomena can weaken its hold on the transcendent personality of God; no speculative construction of nature in its relative order and dependence can distort or dim its vision of the absolute supramundane Deity.

(2) Again, the Theological Principle in question is eminently rational and entirely in harmony with all true *philosophy*. This might be illustrated from the whole history of ancient, mediæval, and modern speculation.

The ancient philosophy in its deep musings in India and Greece, sought for a universal principle by which to explain the myriad, ever-changing appearances of the world; and the various systems

which have been transmitted to us were the results of the efforts made by the master-minds of antiquity to solve this inevitable problem of human thought. If we take the most representative of these great systems—such as the Vedanta and the other five Indian systems, and the Greek systems of the Ionic and Pythagorean Schools, and of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics—we find more or less successful efforts to formulate an ideal theory, aiming at the explanation of the visible by the invisible, the temporal by the eternal, the finite by the infinite. Yet except in so far as the ancient thinkers carried into their speculations the more definite conceptions of the despised popular beliefs and the irrepressible personal needs of their own souls, they can hardly be said to have formulated more than subjective abstractions. With all their high thought they did not penetrate into the reality of nature; and so the origin, persistence, and order of the world remained almost altogether unexplained by them.

The predominance of Christian beliefs and conceptions gave a more definite character and embodiment to the reflection of the Middle Ages, but the best efforts of the mediæval thinkers were suppressed by the unreasoning authority of the Church, or spent themselves in scholastic endeavours to wed the forms of Greek reflection, in

their empty dialectical play, with the unexamined content of the traditional dogmas. The real world of God still lay for the most part wholly outside of their speculations; and while they wove the subtle webs of their own subjective dialectics into ingenious and elaborate forms, the real wisdom and inherent idea of the finite creation continued almost entirely hidden from their ken. The abstract objectivity of the ancient world, with its spontaneous polytheism and pantheism, was thus succeeded by the abstract subjectivity of the Middle Ages, which felt itself estranged by the very intensity of inner religious conviction from the natural ongoings of the external world. The external world became a source of gloomy superstition and fear, and the human soul was thrown into a distracting struggle with itself in the endeavour to realise inward rest and peace—and this became at once the opportunity and the occasion of the development of the ritual and priestcraft of the Roman Church.

With the age of the Reformation the human spirit awoke out of its false dream of mere inner selfness and unrelated self-possession, and threw itself upon the external world again, with a new sense of its inexhaustible resources for promoting the well-being and progress of mankind. The modern philosophy and science quickened by the

free spirit of the Reformation, took this path in thinkers like Descartes, Spinoza, and Bacon, carrying with them as their historical inheritance the counter-tendencies of the ancient and the mediæval spirit. The whole movement of modern philosophy has been a continued effort to give systematic expression to the idealistic and realistic tendencies which it inherited, and recognised as constraining necessities of thought. And from the earliest French to the latest German forms of speculation, we have yet but a series of incomplete and unsatisfying efforts, even at the best and highest, to reconcile the ideal and the real and present them in harmonious union as the ultimate expression of the organisation and movement of the world. Too often, indeed, we have had the idealistic and materialistic tendencies unfolding themselves in extremes which, in their very futility, furnished their own refutation and sank by necessary reaction into the unpractical abnormities of scepticism and agnosticism, or even into utter pessimism and despair of all real good in life or truth in science. The present condition of speculative philosophy is a glaring authentication and illustration of all this. Our age, with all the greatness of its material civilisation, social progress, political freedom, and widespread enlightenment, is reaping the fruits of the spiritual

emptiness and darkness of a reflection and self-assertion that are not conjoined with the fundamental grasp of God and His divine idea in the reality of things.

If the system of the Reformed Theology has a message of deeper meaning to our age, it is here; for it has preserved in the hearts of millions that living faith in the divine origin of the world which has been the chief power in the free and advanced life of the Reformed Churches in the past, and which—thus authenticated—can claim to speak its message to the children of this generation with an authority that does not come from usurpation, and with a certainty which rises higher, and goes deeper into the heart of the spiritual life than all the solitary broodings of the masters of the philosophic schools. Here, we venture to assert, is the true principle of that ideal realism of which the modern thinkers are all in search. Here is the unity in multiplicity, the essential in the phenomenal, the supernatural in the natural, the infinite in the finite, which gives reality to the process of the world, freedom to human thought, and fulness to human life. The view of the world upon which the Reformed Theology proceeds is at once divine and human, dynamical and teleological, central and all-embracing, exhibiting the rise of all things out of

the creative unity which at once sustains and transcends them, and bringing them back again by a divinely constituted and determined order to the ultimate harmony and perfection of a fuller unity. When these thoughts, which lie at the basis of the system of faith we are considering, shall have received their clear scientific articulation and development, philosophy will no longer be the hesitating, uncertain, and half-blind thing it now is, but the all-comprehensive dialectical unfolding of the being and life of the universe as in God.

(3) Finally, the Theological Principle of the Reformed system overcomes the imperfect *theological* positions of our time, and is in harmony with their higher tendencies.

Thus it meets the current *agnosticism*, which is carrying away so many minds from all faith in the supernatural, by showing that phenomena as such are only intelligible as manifestations of a real being or essence beneath, behind, and above them, according to the principle enunciated and applied by Herbart in the sphere of philosophy, that as much appearance as there is in the world, so much corresponding reality must there be that thus appears. And further, by its view of ascending stages in the manifestation of the divine being and attributes, it overcomes the

fallacious assumption on which theological agnosticism is founded, namely, that the highest, completest, and most perfect manifestation of God may be looked for in the sphere of sense, and if anything short of this is found, the divine manifestation in the sensible appearances of things is to be repudiated altogether as incognisable.

The Theological Principle of the Reformed Theology similarly corrects the error and limitation of *deism*, by showing that its mechanical separation of God from the world is untenable, and by substituting for it a dynamical theory of the universe which sees God in constant connection with the world, and makes the world continually dependent upon Him for its subsistence and ongoing. Moreover, by its profounder teleological doctrine it finds God's power and activity immanent in all the forms and life of the natural world, through the order, law, and organisation which have been infused into it by Him, and which subsist and move and ascend from lower to higher stages in virtue of the constant realisation of the eternal purpose and ideas embodied in creation. The fact that the highest individuality is the most complex and the richest in form and faculty and relation, indicates the increasing and ever fuller manifestation of the divine being and attributes; and this higher manifestation lightens and re-

moves most of the difficulty with which the agnostic vainly battles on the lower stages of phenomenal being.

In like manner, the Theological Principle of the Reformed system corrects the error and limitation of *pantheism*, with which it has been often erroneously identified. For while acknowledging with the pantheist the universal pervading presence and power of God in the universe, it yet so distinguishes the infinite from the finite that the finite is seen to be incapable of receiving or holding even within the manifold variety and multiplicity of its forms the incommunicable essence of the infinite God. No other system has asserted more emphatically, or maintained more rationally, the absolute transcendence of the being and personality of God, while nevertheless recognising the penetration and permeation of the whole world by His infinite reason and will. As pantheism in a manner corrects and transcends deism, it is in turn corrected and transcended by this true theological apprehension of the distinction between the personal essence and the finite manifestation of the infinite God. And so, above all the self-manifestation of God in the finite world there is vindicated by the Reformed Theology a sphere of spiritual being higher even than the sphere of poetic and lofty pantheistic conceptions

(such as Tennyson's), even the sphere of God's absolute personality, in which He reveals Himself as realising His own inner being and self-consciousness above the world, prior to the world, supremely independent of the world, and teleologically ultimate to the world.

Once more, the Theological Principle of the Reformed system corrects and overcomes the error and limitation of *pessimism*, which, worked out to its logical conclusions long ago in the oriental Buddhism, is now exercising a strange attraction even upon the practical mind of the western world. Pessimism is only to be overcome by a truer view of the higher relations of the human personality, and of the progressive process of history in God. Its essential error consists in assuming that the finite personality must realise an absolute good at any one moment in time, or is to be annihilated in order to escape from inevitable and inseparable pain and suffering and illusion. But the Reformed Theology, with deeper insight, discerns the ultimate good that is manifested even in the necessary limitations and the apparent imperfections of the world, because these are embraced in the evolution and realisation of the divine purpose, so that in its view good is everywhere and always the "final goal of ill." Pessimism is logically atheistic, and can be met

and refuted only by relating the absolute idea of God to all the parts and constituents of the world, and seeing every moment of the process of history to be potentially full of the actualisation of God's eternal purpose of good.

And not only does the Theological Principle of the Reformed system deliver us from the darkness and doubt and despair of these imperfect systems, but it associates itself with all the higher and more positive efforts and directions of Christian thought and life in our time. While it is severely scientific and logical in its form, it is yet spiritual, universalistic, and evangelical in its application. And so it gathers to itself all that is highest in humanity, carrying us back to the ultimate source in God of all good and all truth, and forward to final participation in the perfect consummation of the world. It contemplates the world as one glorious manifestation of that eternal goodness and truth which is evermore advancing towards the complete and perfect revelation of itself, when the divine in the great world around and in the soul of man within shall have become the all in all.

CHAPTER V.

The Anthropological Principle of Religious Development in the Reformed Theology, subjectively and objectively regarded.

The Theology of the Reformed Church laid its foundation deep and broad in the essential nature of man, and in the universal order of the world. In this fundamental relation it shows not only a strong contrast, but a striking superiority to the Roman, Lutheran, and Socinian systems; and it is no exaggeration to say, it is the only traditional system of positive theology that in its original expression can boldly face the deep scientific questionings and the large religious aspirations of our time. This position, however, is one which has long been largely lost sight of; and the general statement may even appear paradoxical and utterly unhistorical in face of the dwarfed and narrowed conceptions of the Reformed Theology which prevail among us. It is therefore necessary to give some demonstration of the

truth of the position, and to clear away the misunderstandings which have proved, and are still proving fatal to the healthy and natural development of the system, and, more particularly, to the scientific apprehension and establishment of its fundamental principles.

It has become customary to represent the Reformed Theology as a narrow, hard, rigid, inflexible system, essentially incompatible with freedom of movement and progress of thought; and this view of it was never so prevalent and so plausibly argued as it is now. But no one who really knows the history of the Reformed Theology can entertain this opinion, or find any justification for it in its essential principles. In the sixteenth century it was recognised not only as the most complete, but as the most advanced form of Protestant theology; and the standing objections of its Lutheran opponents were directed mainly against its rationalism and latitudinarianism. Even in the seventeenth century, when polemical controversy and internal heresy had stiffened and hardened its vital spirit into a severe scholastic orthodoxy, it still retained its universal scientific interest and its sense for philosophical and historical speculation. Almost all the theological learning of Europe was represented in the Synod of Dort; and even the

Westminster Assembly gathered into itself a force of varied theological erudition and independent theological thought which has never been equalled by any ecclesiastical assembly that has met in our country since. Moreover, the Reformed Church carried forward the work of biblical criticism and exegesis; it eclipsed the Roman Church in its mastery of the patristic literature; it gave a new stimulus to Church History; it systematised doctrinal theology; it first entered into alliance with modern philosophy and science; it originated the new sciences of Biblical Theology and Christian Ethics; and it even kindled in other Churches the zeal of theological reform and progress. The history of all this has yet to be written in a juster and truer way than has so far been done, at least in English; but enough of it is known to meet and silence the objections to the Reformed Theology so often raised by unhistorical sciolists on the score of its unprogressive character.

And when we turn from the historical movement to the essential principles of the system itself, we cannot fail to recognise how profoundly and inherently developmental and progressive it really is. No theological system has so fully and so consciously embodied in itself the great modern principle of evolution, which is now ruling all

thought, science, effort, and aspiration. In reviewing the Theological Principle we saw that, in the profound conception of the Reformed Theology, the world in all its parts, processes, stages, and forms of life is the evolution and development of one divine plan conceived in the eternal reason of the Godhead, and realised throughout all time by creative power, wisdom, and love. From whatever side or point of view we contemplate the universe we may therefore, according to the Reformed Theology, find the reality of this development as a manifestation of the divine activity engaged in realising it. Science shows its manifestation in the physical world; history, advancing from science, shows its progressive manifestation in the moral world; theology, founding upon and yet rising above both, shows its final manifestation in the religious world. This highest manifestation is practically coextensive with the activity of God in developing the religious nature of man, which is its product and authentication.

The religious development may be studied from either of its two sides: from the point of view of God as the absolute and ultimate source, cause, mover, determiner, and effectuator of it; or from the point of view of man as the subject, manifestation, and realised end of it. The former is the properly theological, the latter, the anthropological

point of view. The former we have already looked at in a general way; it remains to look at the latter on its own ground and according to its own method. And this is the more necessary as almost all the objections of any weight advanced against the Reformed Theology as a system have been based upon misunderstanding or misrepresentation of its anthropology. All that is here attempted is to expound the view of the Reformed Theology regarding the religious nature of man as the subject of the religious development, and to refer to the movement of that development in history, with the view of ascertaining its essential forms and the regulating law under which it proceeds.

I. The view held by the Reformed theologians regarding the *subjective principle of religion* received its clearest exposition and illustration in their polemic against the negative theory of the Socinians. The Socinians entirely denied the possibility of a natural theology, holding that all true knowledge of God attained by man was communicated to him by supernatural revelation, and especially by the revelation presented in the New Testament, which Jesus received in an external way from God and authenticated, in conveying it to man, by His miracles and especially

by the miracle of His resurrection. The Socinians founded their system upon the Nominalist theory of the Middle Ages. They were empiricists as regards the origin of knowledge: they held, like Locke and his school, that the mind was a *tabula rasa*, or blank tablet, upon which the external world inscribed its impressions through the senses; and they denied that there were any innate ideas, in the Platonic sense, born in the mind at birth and carrying its knowledge above the sensible finite world into the realm of the supersensible, eternal, and infinite. They were thus positivists, and even agnostics, as regards the natural knowledge of the supernatural. They held that this negative irreligiousness belonged to the original constitution of man; that the first man was in very deed of the earth earthy, a merely mortal, sensuous, finite being without any inborn idea of God; and that man, apart from the corrupting influence of example and tradition, was still in respect of his natural mental endowment and faculties the same as he had ever been. Against this position the Reformed theologians carried on a victorious and conclusive polemic. Their own view comes out in clearest contrast. It is impossible for even the most superficial student of their historical theology to misapprehend or misunderstand it. With com-

plete unanimity and with the utmost emphasis they maintained that all men are born with a religious nature, with a capacity or faculty by which they are able to attain to some knowledge of God and divine things, with the ineradicable germ of a religious life which is capable of being endlessly developed.

This doctrine of the naturalness and universality of the religious element and the infinite potentiality of human nature was expounded with deep philosophical insight, with remarkable classical learning, and with a noble elevation and humanity by Zwingli, the first and the greatest of the philosophical thinkers of the Reformed Church. With a breadth of thought and feeling rare in his age, he recognised a divine inspiration in the thoughts and lives of the nobler spirits of antiquity, such as Socrates, Plato, and Seneca, and hoped even to meet with them in heaven. Calvin, with more caution and reserve as to its individual applications, but with no less earnestness and force, maintained likewise that the religious faculty is naturally implanted in all men without distinction, and is so strongly rooted in the human soul that it would be easier to suppress all the natural inclinations than to uproot the thought of God. He calls the consciousness it produces an inborn, not an acquired knowledge; and holds that the

religious frauds and hypocrisies which have found reception in the world, and even the very denial of the existence of God in the folly of the atheist, show the presence of some notion of God in minds perverted and darkened. Man he characterises felicitously as the *Microcosmos*—the little world, the epitome and sum of the great world, the *Macrocosmos*. Every man, he says, who examines himself will find in his own mind, and in real and living relation to his own life, the idea of God and His power, wisdom, and justice. So, too, his conscience testifies to the difference between good and evil, points to a divine judgment, and gives intimations of immortality. These positions have been adopted by all the great Reformed theologians, and they are recognised and even expressed, with more or less fulness, in all the Reformed Confessions.

Moreover, the Reformed Church has always maintained its anthropological doctrine in opposition to both the Roman and the Lutheran Church. The difference between them comes out most clearly in their respective dogmas regarding the original state of man and the effects of the Fall.

According to the Roman Church, man when created did possess an original knowledge of God and an original righteousness; but this state was

not a natural, inalienable part of his constitution: it was a superadded gift, a special supernatural addition to the natural constitution of man in our first parents. This supernatural or superadded gift (*donum supernaturale* or *superadditum*) was lost by the Fall, and all men have since then been born without it. All true knowledge of God, continues the Roman Church, is derived from tradition; and for the obtaining of such knowledge in any assured form the individual is entirely dependent on the authority of the Church. This doctrine, if not directly laid down in the canons of the Council of Trent, is at least involved in the teaching of its Catechism, and Pius V., Gregory XIII., and Bellarmine have maintained it against the Protestants generally. The Roman Catholic dogma practically comes to the same result as the position of the Socinians; and the Reformed theologians controverted it no less strenuously and earnestly.

The position of the Lutherans virtually amounted to the same thing, although founded on a modified view of the original state of man and the consequences of the Fall. Luther and his consistent followers rejected the Roman Catholic teaching concerning the original state of righteousness as being a superadded, supernatural, adventitious gift, an external addition or contingent accession to

the natural constitution of unfallen man. They agreed with the Reformed theologians that original righteousness was a natural, inherent, essential constituent of the spiritual life of the protoplasts in Paradise. But they held that the Fall so corrupted the original nature of man that his natural knowledge of God became completely obscured and eclipsed, with the consequence that sinful fallen men have no natural capacity for acquiring a knowledge of God or of divine things, but are to be compared only to stocks and stones. Some of Luther's pronouncements on this subject may be attributed to his passionate and impulsive habit of utterance; yet the same general view is maintained also by the later Lutheran theologians in the *Formula Concordiæ*, and is undoubtedly the dominant doctrine of the Old Lutheran Theology. Against this view the Reformed theologians affirmed that while sin had weakened and dimmed man's spiritual vision, and made the attainment of the highest saving knowledge of God impossible without the special redemptive revelation of the purpose and love of God, yet the religious faculty or sense—the *habitus* of religion, as they called it—still remained in human nature as its inalienable and highest characteristic, as what raised man distinctively above the lower animal creation, and made him capable of recognising the revelation of

God and entering into fellowship with God through appropriation of the divine eternal life.

The principle of innate natural religion has been not only characteristic of the Reformed Theology from the beginning, but always fundamental in the genuine expositions of the system. The principle is, in fact, the basis of all psychology of religion, and was clearly apprehended as such in the anthropological discussions of the Reformed theologians. It is therefore entirely erroneous, as well as a great historical injustice, to regard the innateness or naturalness of religion as a new scientific doctrine expounded for the first time in the nineteenth century. It is true that the principle received in the nineteenth century a new importance and a further development by reason of the expansion of psychological science. So far it may be said to be characteristic of the theological method and standpoint of the nineteenth century. Yet it is only justice to acknowledge that even the recent psychological study of religion has been due to the influence and stimulus of the Reformed Theology. For the inauguration and determination of this movement were mainly due, after Kant, to Schleiermacher, who sprang from the Reformed Church as afore-mentioned, and never disowned his obligations to it. We need not here enter upon the subtle and ingeni-

ous analysis by which Schleiermacher resolves all the phenomena of the religious life into manifestations of the feeling of absolute dependence. It is enough to notice that in thus assimilating and applying the psychological principle of religion, he was faithful to the spirit of the Reformed Theology.

The old Reformed theologians expounded the principle with sufficient accuracy and insight to ensure for it a permanent place in all truly scientific theology. They showed that without the religious faculty in human nature, revelation itself would have had no point of attachment, nor would a religious development according to a rational progressive order have been possible at all. And no less clearly did they maintain its inner function, as not only preparing the way for revelation, but as a constituent factor in even the highest forms of the religious life. Beyond this, the modern psychology of religion even in its most philosophical cultivators, such as Jacobi, Fries, Hegel, Biedermann, Martineau, and Pfleiderer, has not been able to go, however it may have modified the expression of the principle or carried it out to further verification in detail.

II. But the Reformed theologians not only accepted and expounded the subjective principle

of religion; they also recognised and exhibited with remarkable clearness and breadth the objective counterpart of the principle, in the necessity and reality of the *historical development of religion.*

The very precision with which they caught and defined the subjective principle led the Reformed theologians directly to this further position. They saw that the germ of religion could not develop without its appropriate nourishment and stimulus and environment. The idea of the later rationalists, that the whole substance of religious truth could be unfolded by mere logical reasoning or dialectic out of a few fundamental propositions or axioms, or even through a series of abstract demonstrations of the being and attributes of God, was to them entirely inconceivable and impracticable. As it started without the basis of any special religious fact and without the very element in the spiritual life which made religion of practical interest, such abstract reasoning could only at the best produce a series of empty logical forms; and the more their emptiness was discerned and felt, the more certainly did the method lead to intellectual uncertainty and even scepticism and nihilism. In short, the whole abstract system of natural theology evolved by and out of the deism of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, was alien to the Reformed conception of natural religion, as

were its products in the various forms of abstract rationalism and supranaturalism which abounded so largely during that time; and one of the greatest, if not even the chief of the merits of Schleiermacher, was to recognise the vanity and futility of the abstract method of dealing with the ultimate reality of religion, and lead back the wearied and parched spirit of his time out of these barren wastes to the fountains of living water flowing ever deep and pure in the depths of the inner life of man itself.

The Reformed Theology sought and found religion in the process of God's living dealings with the spiritual life of men; and it regarded the whole of the world's making and history as the exhibition and manifestation of God's progressive self-realising purpose of salvation. The history of religion, according to the Reformed theologians, is the essence, soul, and consummation of all other history. And not only did they apprehend this in a general way as a matter of faith, but they distinctly recognised the law governing the historical development of religion and making it a rational and progressive process in all its movement and parts. It was in this connection that they formulated their remarkable theory of the Covenants, their so-called Federal Theology; which, rightly understood, contains a complete

Philosophy and History of Religion, and, so far from being superseded in its essentials by recent research, requires only to be explicated anew in terms of contemporary science to embrace every new departure in religion, and to comprehend every new idea and tendency of the philosophical and historical theology of to-day. This position is so important, and yet so much ignored or misunderstood at present, that it is well worthy of consideration and vindication in some detail.

Let us look then at the *Federal Theology* in its fundamental principles, as exhibiting the Principle of Religious Development in the Reformed system of doctrine. Its primary idea is that all religion is founded on the innate natural religious capacity or germ in the human soul, and all realisation of religion developed in the form of a covenant-relationship between God and man, variously manifested and unfolded in the progress of history. The notion of the covenant is otherwise expressed by the idea of communion or fellowship as the living bond or vital connection into which God enters with man in the spiritual life and in the religious consciousness of the soul. This general conception is essentially biblical, being manifestly derived from the terms of the fundamental division of Scripture into the Old and New Testaments, or, more correctly, the Old and New Covenants.

So far, the fundamental conception of the covenant has been accepted, and more or less exhibited in all the various systems of Christian doctrine. But it is characteristic of the Reformed system, in distinction not only from the early Greek and Latin systems but from the later Roman and the contemporary Lutheran system, to carry out the conception in detail. The federal idea is thus peculiarly and essentially typical of the Reformed Theology. And the great value and excellence of its exposition of the federal idea lie in the profound principle which it founds upon, and in the large historical view which determines its applications. The Reformed system not only starts from a clear apprehension of the universal ideal of religion as living communion with God, but it proceeds to recognise and embrace the whole historical development of religion as the necessary and progressive realisation in time of that ideal. This profound view was expressed and elucidated by the Reformed theologians under the twofold designation of the Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace. The nature and relations of these two covenants are often very superficially, and even quite erroneously apprehended by many who criticise and reject them; and there is no more necessary task incumbent on the cultivator of the Reformed Theology than to

exhibit their true nature and relations, and unfold and apply the vital and essential truth which they contain to the religious problems of the present day. For whoever can understand and apply the essential principles of the Federal Theology has understood the fundamental principle of the Reformed doctrine of grace, and realised anew the living purpose of God in the ever-progressing redemption of the world.

By the Covenant of Works the old theologians meant the relation in which God stood to the first Adam before the Fall. This primal paradisaic covenant was entirely grounded on the natural relationship of the first man to God, in virtue of his ideal as a finite being surrounded by the finite world, recognising its appearances as manifestations of God, receiving their impression in his soul, and leading a life in harmony with the order of the world through his own inner responsive recognition of the divine will. Such was his state of integrity and original righteousness, a state of innocence unmodified by the changeful movement of nature and uncorrupted by sensible communion with it. This was the condition of the Covenant of Works, which is more properly termed the Covenant of Nature, and was designated the Covenant of Works only because of the dependence of the continuation of the state of

integrity and righteousness on the perfect observance and fulfilment of the natural law and commandment of God by the obedience of the active human will in good works. But according to all the federal theologians, the ideal condition of the first man was not realised by the experience of his first contact with nature, nor did it pass into the historical experience of his posterity. The Covenant of Works was found to be immediately unrealisable under the immediate conditions of human experience; and the first attempt to realise it brought with it the knowledge of good and evil as an active antagonism limiting the finite human will, and brought with it too the consciousness of the incapacity of the natural man to attain, through his own struggle with this antagonism, to the blessedness of lasting communion and fellowship with God. The Covenant of Works, as the interpretation by the Reformed theologians of the record of the Fall in the Book of Genesis, in accordance with its elucidation in the Pauline doctrine, was thus, as Scholten has put it, "the ideal in which the Reformed Church has expressed its view regarding the original endowment and destination of human nature." In other words, the conception of the Covenant of Works is a dogmatic form of thought, giving expression to the ideal of a sinless humanity;

of a humanity still unmodified in the germ of its natural religious faculty; of a humanity that has not yet passed into the necessary struggle with the limiting conditions of the world, nor attained through the experience of temptation and sin and death to the apprehension and appropriation of the deeper and diviner conditions under which eternal life is to be permanently realised.

And so the old Reformed theologians, regarding the Covenant of Works as in fact broken, violated, and made by the Fall ineffective as the medium of salvation, conceived of a deeper relation of God to man being brought into view by the establishment of a new covenant which, in contradistinction to the Covenant of Works, was called the Covenant of Grace. What man could not achieve by his knowledge of nature and by the works of his own will, was now exhibited as made possible for him by the gracious intervention and working of God in him according to the conditions and method of the new covenant. The realisation of the new Covenant of Grace was not dependent upon the probation of an individual human will, but upon the conditions of an eternal covenant that could not be broken, the Covenant of Redemption between the eternal Father and Son, grounded in God's own being, and effected throughout the whole movement of

human history by the gracious and unceasing activity of God in realising His eternal purpose. Although the representation of the failure of the Covenant of Works in the Fall was often expressed so as to give the appearance of a dualism in the purpose of God (as shown by the controversies between the infralapsarians and the supralapsarians), and although the passage from the state of integrity to the state of corruption was often represented as even implying a failure on the part of God to realise His own eternal purpose with man, these were only imperfect presentations and modifications of the system arising from a crude historical view of the Covenant of Works that misapprehended its ideal substance. The realisation of the Covenant of Grace exhibits the complete execution in time of the divine purpose in eternity.

Yet what is real and substantial in the idea of the Covenant of Works, namely, the destination of man to eternal life in communion with God and the perpetual obligation of the law of righteousness, is taken up into and carried forward to its true realisation in the Covenant of Grace. The relation between the two covenants is the most subtle, and yet the most essential element in the federal conception of progressive religious development. The Covenant of Grace is realised

not in one probational act merely, but in a series of progressive dispensations or economies, which proceed from the first consciousness of sin in fallen Adam to the perfect exhibition of redemption in the sinless consciousness of the Second Adam.

These dispensations or economies or historical stages in the religious development, as the advancing realisation of the Covenant of Grace, have been commonly divided into two, agreeing generally with the Old and New Testaments, and designated as the Dispensation or Economy of the Law and the Dispensation or Economy of the Gospel. But a more penetrating and systematic analysis has divided the historical dispensations into three, which correspond with the orderly movement of the religious history of mankind from its first rudimentary beginning to its culmination in the Christian realisation of its ideal, and which are technically designated the Dispensation or Economy of Grace before the Law, the Dispensation or Economy of Grace under the Law, and the Dispensation or Economy of Grace under the Gospel. Under the first dispensation the matter of the Covenant of Nature or the Covenant of Natural Religion is retained, but exhibited in the higher spiritual consciousness and vitalisation of grace. Under the second

dispensation the matter of the Covenant of Legal Works or of the Moral Law is presented in a special historical form in the life of a chosen people, and as vitalised by a higher consciousness of the indwelling spirit of grace; while the matter of the Covenant of Nature is also carried up into it, and associated with its higher realisation of grace. Finally, the crowning stage of the Covenant of Grace, that of the Dispensation of the Gospel, is the pure immediate revelation to the human soul of God's gracious purpose of redemption, which was contained in a latent and veiled form in the previous dispensations, but is now fully revealed and realised in the perfect work and life of Jesus Christ, the true atoning and reconciling manifestation of the eternal love of God. The historical realisation of redemption proceeds, therefore, from stage to stage through the various economies or dispensations of grace, beginning from the primary manifestations of grace in the sphere of Nature, and rising through the manifestation in the Dispensation of the Law, till the full and final manifestation is reached in the Dispensation of the Gospel. Its three stages are the religion of nature, the religion of legality in the moral order, and the religion of immediate spiritual redemption and free grace. It is the same system of redemption all through, namely,

redemption by grace; and the stages in the history of redemption differ only in their external form or medium, and in the degree of clearness and fulness in the manifestation of grace. The quickening and impelling life of the movement is determined by the inner conflict of the ideal element of the Covenant of Works as the apprehension of an unrealised spiritual perfection in the subject, and the inworking of the power of grace to meet and satisfy the living sense of need. The element of the Covenant of Works is the negative condition of the onward and upward movement, while the element of grace is the positive determining power in the process.

The advance from the primary stage of natural religion through the intermediate stage of legal religion to the final stage of evangelical religion, moves, when determined by the vital working of grace, in a normal, ordained order and way; and all the modes and forms of religion which have taken shape in history, are either the normal stages of the developmental process or abnormal retrogressions and deviations. When the lower stage of religion ceases to be animated and elevated by the inworking of grace, it becomes deadened or distorted, assuming superstitious and bastard forms—degraded and futile representations, as we might describe them, of the Covenant

of Works. Thus the true religion of nature, as we see it in the patriarchal life of the Old Testament, degenerates into manifold forms of idolatry when the creature takes the place of the Creator as the object of the religious faith; and the true legal religion of the Mosaic Economy, when it is divested of the inworking of grace, similarly becomes mere formal Judaism and outward work-righteousness.

This, generally, is the view of religious development and of the relation of paganism and Judaism to Christianity which is involved, and more or less explicitly unfolded, in the theory of the Covenants of Works and Grace in the Theology of the Reformed Church.

It is now easy to show in the light of recent researches that this is no fanciful rendering of the Theology of the Reformed Church, but its very marrow and substance. The theory of the Covenants took the place in the Reformed Church of the Augustinian realistic theory, which was handed on through the Middle Ages by great theologians like Anselm and Aquinas, notwithstanding the prevailing Semi-Pelagianism of the Roman Church. According to Augustine, the whole posterity of Adam really pre-existed in him as their progenitor, and actually participated in his first sin and Fall, so sharing his guilt and becoming like him justly liable as guilty individuals to its penalty. But

this theory, although adopted by Luther, was seen to be untenable notwithstanding the ingenious physiological and exegetical arguments by which it was defended. With their more rational moral consciousness the Reformed theologians turned away from the Augustinian doctrine, and viewed Adam, not as the progenitor or root of the race in the religious relation, but rather as its ideal representative, standing to all his posterity in the position of a "public person" representing them before God, rather than as a genetic individual in whom they were actually present and co-operant. In this way the idea of the federal representation of the human race in Adam took its rise in the Reformed Church, and led to the development of the Federal Theology.

It has been usual to represent the Dutch theologian Cocceius as the originator of the Federal Theology; but although it was developed by him and his follower Witsius and others into its most systematic form, the theory was much older, and may even be traced to the first theologians of the Reformed Church. The idea of the Covenants is at least indicated by Calvin in his Institutes. It was outlined by Henry Bullinger, Zwingli's successor at Zurich, who corresponded with Lady Jane Grey, Cranmer, and other reformers of the Church of England. It

was developed by John Alasco, the minister of the Frisian congregation of the Reformed Church in London in the time of Edward VI. It found its way into Scotland at the time of the Scottish Reformation, and gave that peculiar form and complexion to the theological thought and the practical reforming work of the Scottish Church which have remained its most distinguishing characteristic. It received clear theological expression before the close of the sixteenth century in the writings of Robert Rollock, the first Principal of the University of Edinburgh. It was the familiar commonplace of the whole Covenanting period of the seventeenth century. Among the Puritans it obtained almost universal acceptance by the middle of the seventeenth century; and it received prominent and permanent expression in the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms. But there it is to some extent combined with the Augustinian realistic theory: Adam is represented both as the root of humanity, embracing all his posterity in his own person, and also as the covenant or federal head and representative of the race.

The covenant doctrine continued to be the characteristic doctrine of the Scottish Church; and in the beginning of the eighteenth century it gave origin to the one great doctrinal contro-

versy which stands out in our Church's annals. This is known as the Marrow Controversy, and it is still of living importance. It originated at a time when, in consequence of the Revolution Settlement and the restoration of patronage, the spirit of the Church was taking on the calculating political expediency and the cold formal moralism of the eighteenth century. The Church was being disturbed by the tendency to Arian and Pelagian heresy which was rapidly spreading in England, and which found a certain expression in the teaching of John Simson, Professor of Divinity in the University of Glasgow. The discussions in his case raised the whole question of the basis of the evangelical doctrines; which led to the revival and advocacy of the Federal Theology, in the form in which it had received its purest expression. This was brought about by Thomas Boston, the minister of Ettrick, the well-known author of the "Four-fold State," a work planned and elaborated on the lines of the Federal Theology. Boston tells us that when he was minister of Simprin, he happened to pick up an old book in the house of one of his parishioners. His attention having been arrested by a cursory glance at it, he took it home, and from earnest perusal and study of it, received new and deeper views of the whole doctrine of grace. This book was the cele-

brated "Marrow of Modern Divinity," a work written by Edward Fisher, an English gentleman and student of Oxford, in the year 1646. The "Marrow of Modern Divinity" contains, in the form of ingenious and animated dialogue, a discussion and exposition of the principles of the Federal Theology, treating, especially in its first part, of the Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace. It is founded upon the writings of the leading reformers, including Luther and Melanchthon, but particularly upon the writings of the theologians of the Reformed Churches of Switzerland, Holland, England, and Scotland. Its great aim was to vindicate the doctrine of grace against the charge of legalism on the one hand and of antinomianism on the other; and nothing has ever been written in which the doctrine has received a clearer, subtler, or more convincing expression. Boston told his friends who were maintaining the evangelical doctrines in the General Assembly, about the book; and as it was out of print, James Hog, the minister of Carnock, published in the year 1717 a new edition of it with a recommendatory preface. The book obtained wide circulation, and was recognised as the text-book of the evangelical party, who became known as the Marrow men. They included, besides Boston and Hog, Ebenezer Erskine, Ralph Erskine, and

other leading divines. But the evangelical doctrine of the "Marrow," with its subtle distinction of the Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace, was by no means palatable or acceptable to the leaders of the Church of Scotland of the time, and was indeed quite alien to their spirit and policy. These leaders—the precursors and founders of the Moderate party, which was to rule the Church for at least an hundred and fifty years—soon found themselves in antagonism with what they regarded as the dangerous, extreme, antinomian standpoint of the Marrow Theology. In consequence of the increasing agitation among the clergy on the subject, the Commission of the General Assembly took it up, and presented a report to the Assembly of 1720 in which the theological positions contained in the "Marrow of Modern Divinity" were examined, and five of them declared to be "heresies of doctrine," while other six were condemned as "paradoxical" statements tending to misunderstanding and error. After elaborate debate in the General Assembly, led in the dominant Moderate party by Principal Haddow of St. Andrews, and on the part of the evangelicals or Marrow men by Boston and Drummond of Crieff, the report was adopted and approved by an overwhelming majority, and the

fundamental positions of the "Marrow" authoritatively condemned. The minority protested, and drew up a careful representation, in which they maintained that the orthodox evangelical doctrine of grace had been condemned by the General Assembly, and prayed for the repeal of the resolution of the Assembly. The Representers, as they were called, and their protest were very vigorously dealt with by the General Assembly of 1722, which declared their action disloyal and injurious to the authority of the Assembly, and, more emphatically and at greater length than in 1720, pronounced a condemnatory judgment of the positions of the "Marrow" previously adjudicated upon.

The resolution thus carried may be designated the great Declaratory Act of the Church of Scotland regarding its doctrine, and more particularly regarding the doctrines of grace, as enunciated in the Westminster and other Confessions of the Reformed Church. And whoever examines this Act with adequate theological knowledge, cannot doubt that it is to a large extent heterodox in its fundamental positions, and has had the most prejudicial influence upon the subsequent theology and life of the Church. The leaders of the Moderate party were men of considerable ability, but they were not profound theologians, and they

seem to have been utterly incapable of apprehending the historical relations of the Reformed doctrine of grace. In particular, they declared in their Act that the distinction so clearly expounded in the "Marrow" between the Law of Works and the Law of Christ was "utterly groundless," and with this pronouncement they swept away the historical spirit and the developmental principle of the Federal Theology. The Representers submitted to be rebuked, but they maintained their position; and a new edition—the twelfth—of the "Marrow" was published by Boston, with extensive notes, in the year 1727 to prove that it contained only the essential Theology of the Reformed Church.

But after that year we hear very little of the doctrine of grace for more than a century in the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland; and it is significant that a distinguished historian of the Church pauses in his record to mention that the year 1727 was the year of the introduction of the dinners at Holyrood Palace, and that the Lord High Commissioner "was much praised for his plentiful board, and was greatly liked"! From 1727 we may date the complete ascendency of the Moderate party in the Church of Scotland—under the leadership of Haddow, Robertson, Hill, and Cook—with the predominance of the cold

moral theology, the external apologetics, and the rationalistic supranaturalism in the sphere of faith which have always been characteristic of the party. At the same time, it was the evangelical spirit of the Marrow party which led to the first conflict in the Church of Scotland with the administration of patronage—a conflict which resulted in the first secession, that of the Original Seceders, from the Church of the Revolution Settlement, and in the later secessions which culminated in 1847 in the United Presbyterian Church. The evangelical spirit which was left in the Church after these first secessions gradually took shape in the later evangelical party, which carried through the last great conflict within the Church of Scotland, and at the disruption of 1843 formed itself into the Free Church. There can be no question, from the theological point of view, that the United Presbyterian Church and the Free Church were genuine branches of the Reformed Church; and the fact of their formation is a melancholy comment on the theological weakness and incapacity of the Church of Scotland of the eighteenth century.

While doing justice to these evangelical offshoots of the Church of Scotland, let us also be just to the spirit and achievement of the Church itself. Its supreme interest was the maintenance

of the moral life. It erred, indeed, in thinking the moral life endangered by the evangelical doctrine of grace in its historical form; but as the established guardian of the national morality, it was right to vindicate its position according to its best understanding, and it is unquestionable that much is due to its representatives for their elegant expositions of moral truth, their ardent cultivation of general philosophy and literature, and their longing and striving after a larger and more comprehensive view of the Christian faith. Moreover, the evangelical party, from the very concentration and one-sidedness of its polemic, has been always in danger of giving a narrow, exclusive, and unconnected view of the doctrine of grace, torn and separated from its broad basis in the natural and moral conditions of human nature, and intensified in its very narrowness by a predominance of emotional excitement and undisciplined feeling.

If the sketch of this controversy has any practical lesson for us in view of the dividing and distracting influence which remains in operation still, it is the call for a return to the more comprehensive view of the early theologians of the Reformed Church, and especially to their larger and truer apprehension of the Principle of Religous Development in the system of theology.

We still look in vain in the theological literature of the Reformed Churches in Scotland for an adequate *history of the religious development of mankind* as an application on the anthropological side of the fundamental principle of the sovereignty of God, especially in the exercise of His free grace. One great theologian of the first rank in the Reformed Church, Jonathan Edwards, did indeed, in the deep spirit of the system, catch the idea of such a history; but he did not live to achieve it in all the breadth and depth of his conception; and we have only an imperfect sketch of it in his posthumous work entitled "The History of Redemption." The spirit of the eighteenth century, although it produced some great historians, including Principal Robertson, the leader of the Moderate party in the Church of Scotland, was neither profound enough nor earnest enough in the highest spiritual sphere for the accomplishment of such a task. Its negative critical mood, its one-sided intellectual enlightenment, its narrow unsympathetic individualism, its external deistic apprehension of God as an extra-mundane power that leaves the world, not only in its physical ongoings but in its historical struggles, to the working of its own laws and forces, unfitted the eighteenth century for spiritual insight into the immanent causality and activity of God in human

history. It was thus prevented from viewing the history of religion as more than the accidental exhibition of human caprice and superstition. The typical representation of the historical scepticism and nihilism of the age is to be found in Hume's "Natural History of Religion," which was very commonly accepted, even by leading Churchmen, as a sort of *reductio ad absurdum* of the whole subject; and it may be regarded, even more than the cynical antichristianism of Voltaire, as the logical and natural outcome of the whole deistic movement. Under these conditions it seemed to the profounder thinkers that no resource for religion was to be found in history, and that the only basis upon which the spiritual life and character could be built and sustained was the moral nature of man, as ascertained by the intuitive consciousness of the individual, and interpreted by the intellectual formulæ of speculative science.

The great expounder of this view of religion, the master mind of this speculative tendency of the eighteenth century, was Immanuel Kant, who, in his crowning work entitled "Religion within the Limits of Mere Reason," published in 1793, formulated on an external Judaistic standpoint the religious moralism of the eighteenth century. He summed up his view in the one proposition

that "religion is the recognition of our moral duties as divine commands." While admitting the moral depth involved in the Christian dogmas, and even the excellence of the conception of the Christian Church as an institution of morality, he regarded all else in the traditional system as mere priestcraft and illusion in so far as it went beyond the religious vindication of the categorical imperative of the moral law. Kant's position, from the very clearness and simplicity with which he expounded it, has been easily recognised as practically identical with the standpoint of the Old Testament Law, and so as essentially moving on a lower plane than the evangelical and saving truth of the Christian doctrine of grace. His celebrated vindication of the doctrine of immortality as consisting in the progression of the will through an infinite endless series of absolutely free volitions towards the realisation of its perfection, is essentially Pelagian in its character and Arminian in its form; and even this conception—the highest result reached by his system—furnishes an illustration of its fundamentally legal and unevangelical character. The value of Kant's Philosophy of Religion consists in the clear recognition and emphatic assertion of the principle of natural theology in the moral sphere.

The spirit of the nineteenth century carried it

as by a necessary movement into a more sympathetic attitude towards the history of religion. Liberated by the great revolutionary overthrow from the conventional superficiality and narrowness of the eighteenth century, it entered under the guidance of Fichte, Schelling, and the other leaders of the new thought into the school of romanticism, with its profound sympathy for all the holy mysteries of the past; and it emerged therefrom with a wider view of the moral order of the world, and a new conception of the universality of historical development and evolution. It is to Hegel that we owe the profoundest and largest expression of this new philosophical spirit; and not the least remarkable of his achievements is his application of it to the elucidation of the idea and development of all religion. In his posthumous lectures on the "Philosophy of Religion" we have the first thoroughgoing exposition of the universal Principle of Religious Development. It is presented in accordance with the absolute idealism of his philosophical system. It would be superfluous to praise this great work of the profound German thinker, which inaugurated the new science of Comparative Religion. It would be equally disingenuous to conceal the disturbing, and even destructive influence which the Hegelian Philosophy of Religion has exercised upon the higher

Christian life, through its advanced radical expounders, the left-hand disciples of the school, such as Baur, Strauss, Feuerbach, Arnold Ruge, and the Young Hegelians generally. It must, however, be admitted that Hegel's treatment is far from perfect. His definition of the idea or conception of religion is confused and ambiguous, and could not but give rise to the subsequent differences and excesses among his followers. His determination of the relations of religion to art and philosophy has been misleading and detrimental, while his characterisation and filiation of the different religions, though always striking and suggestive, are open to objection and correction in detail in the light of subsequent research. Above all, his view of religion as essentially a lower mode of thought than that attained in philosophy, has been justly objected to as a one-sided intellectualism and rationalism, falling far short of the psychological depth and the spiritual vitality of Schleiermacher's view. Yet the least that can be said of Hegel's work is that it is the objective and historical complement and counterpart of Schleiermacher's subjective and intuitional method; and, as such, it has given direction to much fruitful investigation of the history of religion, and to the establishment once for all of the conception of historical development as

applicable to the whole past of the religious life of mankind viewed as an organic unity.

The religions of the world fall, according to Hegel, into three great divisions, which constitute so many stages in the development of the religious idea. First, there is the stage of Nature-religion, including the lower forms of sorcery, fetichism, and other naturalistic cults; in all of which the religious spirit is still living in natural union with the external world, and has not yet realised its essential superiority to it. Secondly, there is the stage of Spiritual Individuality, embracing the Religion of Sublimity, which was the ancient Hebrew religion; the Religion of Beauty, which was the ancient Greek religion; and the Religion of Adaptation or Utilitarianism, which was the ancient Roman religion; in all of which the religious spirit is conscious of its personal distinction both from the lower natural world and from the higher invisible world of the divine, and seeking reconciliation and union with them. And thirdly, there is the highest and final stage of religion, the Absolute Religion, the Revealed Religion, Christianity; in which the religious spirit of man rises above its struggle with the finite world, and becomes reconciled with the divine by conscious union and even identity with God.

Such, briefly, is Hegel's view of the develop-

ment of religion in the spiritual life of mankind. Manifestly, it has much that is attractive, suggestive, and even excellent in it. And, however paradoxical and startling it may sound, it has a certain affinity with the old view of religious development worked out by the theologians of the Reformed Church in their Federal Theology, and particularly in connection with the economies and administration of the Covenant of Grace. There are the same three stages; the same upward movement from lower to higher; the same culmination in Christianity as the absolute religion of reconciliation and redemption; and at least a kindred view of the inner struggle of vitalising, conflicting, and unifying elements, exhibiting the resolution of their antagonism in a higher unity and the involution or vital synthesis of what is true in their constituent elements in the universal world-religion, Christianity. Indeed, it might be shown more at length that what is permanently valuable in Hegel's exposition lies in his appropriation of the historical principle of the Reformed Theology, while its errors and imperfections are attributable to the elements which he derived from the traditional Lutheranism in which he was reared. His blending of the divine and human, of the infinite and finite, into the religious idea only realised in the human consciousness, was precisely the philo-

sophical outcarrying of the old Lutheran mysticism and Eutychianism, which the Reformed Church with its clear and carefully drawn distinction between the divine and human, the infinite and finite, continually guarded against; while his confused rendering of the Incarnation and the Person of Christ may be similarly traced to the same source. Hence, Feuerbach's resolution of all theology into anthropology, and his caricature of the idea of God as but an inverted image of man, as well as Strauss's mythical sublimation of religious history and critical annihilation of the redemptive process, which have worked such havoc in the narrow and stifling confines of the Lutheran dogmatism, have had no terror and very little significance to the more deeply grounded faith and wider vision of the Reformed Church. In view of all this, the Reformed theologian can easily eliminate the misleading elements of the Hegelian system, and largely profit by its earnest exposition of the unity of the religious process and the Principle of Religious Development.

When we look at the work which has as yet been done in this sphere by the thinkers and scholars of our own country, we find, if no complete system, at least valuable material furnished from different points of view, which the Reformed theologians would do well to appreciate and use.

The inquiries into the origin and nature of religion especially in prehistoric times and among the lower uncivilised races, do not indeed carry us very far, if any length at all, in the line of the Reformed Theology. Neither the animism of Edward Burnett Tylor, nor the ghost theory of Herbert Spencer, nor the totemism of Sir John Lubbock can be regarded as throwing any original or widely diffused light on even the first stage of the religious development, and they do not account at all for the emancipation from it or the elevation above it. But it would be unjust not to acknowledge with the sincerest gratitude the contributions of the greatest student of the history of ancient mythology and religion in our time, the unwearied and eloquent expounder of the new Science of Religion, Max Müller.

In all his remarkable writings on the ancient Sanskrit literature and religions, in his learned editing of the Sacred Books of the East, in his lectures on "The Science of Religion," in his "Chips," in his Hibbert Lecture, and again with greater fulness and summarising completeness in his Gifford Lectures, Max Müller enriched our literature with a series of most valuable contributions in this department. Above all things he insisted on the necessity of basing Christian theology upon a renewed study of natural religion,

and especially upon an historical and comparative study of the great Oriental religions that preceded Christianity. Whatever view may be taken of his particular theories and interpretations as to the rise and development of the religious ideas that give their distinctive character to the great Oriental mythologies, it ought to be clear to every student of the Reformed Theology who really understands its basis and method, that it has no quarrel with these historical inquiries and researches, but rather every reason to welcome them as giving new support and illustration to its fundamental historical principle. But while saying this, it is no less just to say that those inquiries and researches, although bringing much valuable new material to light, are not in themselves, as regards either their idea or their application, so entirely new as they are often represented or supposed to be; indeed, it is not too much to say that what is most essential in them was more than anticipated in the profound thought of the federal theologians, and more than provided for in the forms of their scheme of historical development. For with all his rich store of Oriental learning, his ingenious faculty for comparison and combination, and his genius for lucid and fascinating exposition, Max Müller has not by any means superseded the old Reformed Theology in his conception of the relation of

Christianity to the ethnic religions, nor did he even penetrate so deeply as it did into the indwelling unity which combines them into one, namely, the divine purpose of grace. After all, his conception of natural religion in its historical form is drawn from stagnant, undeveloped survivals which are still almost wholly void of that consciousness of grace that carried its subjects in the normal line of the religious movement up to the higher moral stage; and his argument for the superiority of Christianity over all the other religions of the world, while always relevant and striking, is yet founded mainly upon either an external comparison of them or an examination of their agreements in the merest commonplaces of religious thought. Neither in his exposition of Physical Religion nor Anthropological Religion nor Psychological Religion has he brought forward any principle essentially new to the Reformed Theology, although he has very largely enriched the treasury of its resources with means for further establishing its principle of development, and exhibiting that principle as operating through a wider range of human faith and experience.

The study of the pagan religions cannot carry its votaries beyond the Outer Court of the Gentiles. It is only in the light of the Revealed Religion, as reflected in the Reformed faith, that we can

certainly or safely enter into the Holy of Holies, where, in view of the highest mysteries and in the immediate consciousness of the living presence of God, we realise the consummating and saving grace of the forerunner and High Priest of our profession, even Jesus, at once the author and the finisher of our faith.

CHAPTER VI.

The Principle of Absolute Predestination in the Reformed Theology, historically formulated and scientifically estimated.

The Principle of Absolute Predestination has been called the "heart" of the Reformed Church. It has certainly been the support of the heroic faith and endurance of its confessors and martyrs, and it has been consecrated by their grand devotion. The deep valleys and giant mountains of Switzerland, sinking into the abysmal depths of the primal creation, and towering into the blue heavens above with the cold purity of eternal snow; the fair cities and fields of joyous France; the noble valley of the Rhine, from the pine forests of Swabia to the lowlands of Holland, are all eloquent on the page of history of this great principle. Nor can we forget the martyr fires of Smithfield, and the last successful struggle of England for political independence; nor the birth in Scotland of a new people aglow

with the fire of a higher patriotism, and ready to give their life's blood for their Covenanted religion. The Principle of Absolute Predestination was the very Hercules-might of the young Reformation, by which, no less in Germany than elsewhere, it strangled the serpents of superstition and idolatry; and when it lost its energy in its first home, it still continued to be the very marrow and backbone of the faith of the Reformed Church, and the power that carried it victoriously through all its struggles and trials. The principle is to be read all through the writings of the great Reformed theologians; and the Reformed Church never knew weakness nor decline till its vision became dimmed by the mists of the things of time for the eternal, immutable basis of its saving faith. The whole history of the dogmatic theology of the Reformed Church might be written under the one heading of the Principle of Absolute Predestination; it has been, generally speaking, at once the basis of all its orthodoxy, the occasion of all its heresies, and the indirect cause of all its schisms.

Yet there have not been wanting voices even in the bosom of the Reformed Church that have disclaimed or repudiated the principle, and they never spoke out their discontent or revolt more boldly than now. As a typical historic illustra-

tion one might review the protracted controversy over the faith of the Church of England on this root-question, from days long before the falling away of Archbishop Laud, down to the present hour when the principle of the Reformed Church seems to have given way on the one hand to rationalistic indifference, and on the other to the sacramentarian superstition which it was formulated to guard against. And even among theologians of profounder thought and wider learning than the Arminians of the Church of England, the principle has been rejected as non-essential or even alien to the Theology of the Reformed Church. Chief among these may be mentioned Ebrard, a theologian of the Reformed Church of the nineteenth century, of firm faith and rich theological equipment, who did good service as the apologist of revealed truth against the new negative criticism and the scientific scepticism of the time. Ebrard has shown truly enough that the principle was not formulated in its thorough logical form in the early Confessions of the Reformed Church; but as was pointed out by Schweizer, as against Ebrard, it is impossible to deny that it has been from the very beginning the cardinal and essential principle in every orthodox representation of the system of the Reformed Theology. Schweizer

calls up the whole cloud of witnesses in the various Continental branches of the Reformed Church from Zwingli onwards, in refutation of Ebrard's allegation and in support of his own more accurate contention. A similar service was done to the cause of the Reformed Theology in the Church of England by Principal William Cunningham. He showed, with wonderful knowledge and masterly power, that all the great theologians in the Anglican Church during the reigns of Henry VIII., Edward VI., and Elizabeth were profound and thoroughgoing predestinarians, and that the Arminianism of Laud and his successors was unquestionably a fundamental deviation from the Reformed type of doctrine, which was set forth, with caution and reserve indeed, in the Thirty-nine Articles, but with most pronounced and distinct orthodoxy in the Lambeth Articles and the Irish Articles of Archbishop Ussher. These last, as recent inquiry has proved, formed the direct antecedents of the exposition of the Reformed system contained in the Westminster Confession. Again, we have only to turn to such a sketch of the "Theology and Theologians of Scotland" as is presented by Dr. James Walker, to see that the same position may be fully proved of the early Scottish Reformed Theology. The chief theological work of

John Knox was his Treatise on Predestination, a keen, forcible, and unflinching polemic against the loose views which, notwithstanding the teaching of Calvin, were already rising in England and elsewhere. Principal Rollock, a pupil of Andrew Melville, gave no uncertain echo to Knox's teaching; and the elaborate learning and argumentation of Boyd of Trochrigg, in his massive commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians, culminated in a powerful and minute discussion of predestination in one of the appendices to the commentary. The theologians of the Second Reformation and the Covenanting struggle were all equally earnest in maintaining the fundamental doctrine, and even carried it to its highest theological expression. The discussion of Predestination by Samuel Rutherford, the author of the celebrated Letters, is justly famed as a masterpiece of profound thought, recondite learning, and metaphysical argumentation, not unworthy of Calvin and Beza themselves. At the Synod of Dort the Scottish Commissioner stood firmly by the orthodox principle; and the Covenanting opposition to the innovations of Laud went deeper into the heart of the evangelical faith than the external question as to the use of a prayer-book or the assertion of the right of Presbyterian independence. After the Revolution Settlement,

as we have already noted, the severe orthodoxy of the Church became weakened, and in the time of the Marrow Controversy, which took its rise exactly a hundred years after the Synod of Dort, the spirit of the Church had become somewhat estranged from the fundamental form and applications of the principle of predestination. The growing indifference of the eighteenth century to the dogmatic tradition is illustrated by almost the whole theological literature of the Church of Scotland during that period, although Principal Hill, in his "Lectures on Divinity," gave a careful, learned, conscientious, and well-reasoned account of Calvinism and of the Arminian controversy. In the nineteenth century we can only refer to the earnest ethical exposition of the Calvinistic determinism, as the basis of evangelical doctrine, by Dr. Chalmers in his posthumous "Institutes of Theology"; and the vigorous, erudite, if somewhat hard and formal discussion and apology of the Calvinistic system in the works of Principal William Cunningham, who, along with Dr. Thomas Crawford, represents the last phase of the pure Calvinistic tradition among us.

There can be no doubt that the principle of predestination entered deep into the whole Christian life of Scotland during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, that it pervaded the

popular theological works of Boston and the other leaders of evangelical thought, and that it not only gave its distinctive character to the religion of Scotland but trained Scotsmen in the highest exercise of their reflective and reasoning powers—whatever may be said to the contrary by those who have never fathomed the keen theological controversies of the Scottish Church and people, nor taken the trouble even to understand the questions at issue. The Calvinism of Scotland has been praised on the ground of its deep spiritual power in shaping the outward fates as well as the inner life of the country, by men like Carlyle and Froude, and by every Church historian worthy of the name. Nowhere, except perhaps in Holland and New England, has religious controversy played so deep a part in the life of a people; and nowhere has Schopenhauer's maxim that "religion is the metaphysics of the people" received such ample and profound illustration. Questions regarding the spiritual life and destiny of man as deep as any that have exercised and perplexed human thinking, the questions of predestination and foreordination, election and reprobation, the extent and value of the Atonement, the grounds and assurance of faith, the freedom of the will, the alienability of grace, and the perseverance of the saints—these,

and questions like them were once the absorbing interest of the Scottish peasantry. But in those days of manifold social distraction, when the struggle for existence has become intense, and the energy of life concentrated in outward selfish effort, it seems almost like the echo of an old forgotten legend to speak of the Principle of Absolute Predestination as constituting the centre and source of earnest life in God. Indeed, a learned nobleman who in our time stood out conspicuously as representing the living spirit of the Scottish Church, deemed it a ground of valid apology for its continued maintenance that through his long life he never heard the doctrine of predestination once referred to in a Scottish sermon. Such a statement is significant of the change of view that has come over Scottish Theology; and it may well suggest the necessity of a renewed examination of the significance and validity of the great historical principle of the Reformed Theology.

In dealing with the Principle of Absolute Predestination, I shall attempt, first, to show how it took its characteristic form in the Reformed Theology of the past; then, secondly, to indicate how far it is still capable of being scientifically

developed and applied as a valid theological principle.

I. It is easy to see, in the light of our previous discussions, how the Principle of Absolute Predestination logically took shape, as the ultimate expression of the Protestant Reformation in its search for a certain and infallible ground upon which to base the personal assurance of salvation.

1. The Protestantism of Luther, who had struggled in vain to find satisfaction for the burning want of his soul in the monastic method, was essentially the repudiation of the whole Roman theory of righteousness by works, and the assertion of deliverance from the power and penalty of sin through the personal act of justification by faith in the atoning sacrifice and merits of Jesus Christ. In the doctrine of justification by faith alone, which he designated "the article of a standing or falling Church," he found at once a fulcrum whereon to rest the lever that overthrew the corrupt ecclesiastical system in Germany, and a central point of support for the consciousness of salvation in the individual soul. The doctrine of justification by faith alone became, as it has been till to-day, the fundamental material principle or dogma of the Lutheran Church in its reception and appropriation of the Christian salva-

tion. It was the expression of a thoroughgoing reaction from the externality of the Roman Church in its elaborate objective institutionalism, to the internality of an immediate consciousness of personal salvation.

This the profounder theologians of the Reformed Church clearly saw; but their recognition of the human subjectivity and consequent limitation of the principle, drove them a step further back in their elucidation of the process of salvation, and raised them out of the uncertainty of mere human subjective conviction to an immediate apprehension of the objective certainty of salvation as ultimately founded in the eternal divine purpose. The doctrine of justification by faith alone, although an effective antidote to the Roman righteousness by works and a deep and true explanation of the beginning and working of redemption in the individual soul, was yet but an anthropological principle; it was based upon a determinate act of the human mind; it was a mere state of consciousness, and so subject to all the limitation and contingency of the finite individual. So the Reformed theologians could not rest in it. They rose above Luther's position to the recognition of the immediate energy of the divine personality in the human experience of salvation. They resolved the human act of

faith into a manifestation in time of the determining activity of divine grace; and with the word, grace, they passed behind the human process into the ultimate sphere of the divine purpose, realising that the process of salvation in the human soul is the highest and most special outgoing in the finite world of the divine causality. The principle of sovereign grace was the ultimate theological issue of the special protest of the Reformed Church against the pagan idolatry of the creature. With it, all reliance for salvation upon any creature or creaturely act or creaturely condition, was completely swept away; and the certainty of salvation was grounded solely upon the eternal nature and working of God Himself. The finite was recognised in its essential negativity and limitation, even in the highest operations of the human personality; and that personality was brought face to face with the infinite in the omnipresent, omnipotent, and omniscient God as the only source of its being, life, and salvation. Hence the ultimate principle of the Reformed Theology is distinctively theological. And it is not too much to say that the Reformed Church has been in this respect the very hearth and home of the deepest modern faith in the personality and self-communicating will of God.

It was only a logical development of the general essence of their fundamental idea when the Reformed theologians represented the relation between the ultimate activity of God and the consciousness of redemption which it awakened in the soul of man, as the relation between an eternal purpose in God and its execution or realisation in time. It was to them inconceivable that the process of salvation could be conditioned by anything in the subordinate finite sphere, which was entirely dependent upon the divine energy for all its being and power. The purpose of God was therefore conceived of as absolute and unconditioned, that is, independent of the whole finite universe, and originating solely in itself or in the eternal counsel and will of God. The finite, having no essential being or independence of its own, and no other reason for its existence and conservation than to be a medium for the manifestation of the glory of God, could originate no condition or energy which would of itself determine, limit, or frustrate the manifestation of that glory. The finite is through its whole range absolutely dependent upon God, and the last ground of that utter dependence is the absolute purpose of God. Eternity being then commonly conceived after the popular mode of thought as prior to time, as its antecedent in

the order of being, the eternal purpose was represented as an act of predestination or foreordination, as having its rise and existence in the eternal past of the divine nature and mind, as absolute in and of itself, as unconditioned by any subsequent fact or change in time, and as lying at the basis of the divine foreknowledge of all future contingent events, not being consequent upon or conditioned by that foreknowledge or by anything originated by the events themselves. Such is, in outline, the Reformed Principle of Absolute Predestination in its relation to the world in general.

The doctrine of absolute *election and reprobation* was only a special application of the fundamental principle. The Reformed theologians had the courage of their convictions, and applied their principle unhesitatingly to their actual experience of spiritual phenomena. They found in human life the distinction between good and evil, the saint and the sinner, the regenerate and the unregenerate, the penitent and the impenitent; and they carried back that incontrovertible fact of experience to its ultimate explanation in the divine purpose or predestination. They did not shrink even from recognising sin, both in its original entrance into the world with the Fall and in all its subsequent appearances, as involved in

the eternal divine purpose. They held it to be so involved because it was destined to be the condition of a higher manifestation of the divine glory. The divine glory is manifested in the display of the divine attributes in the order of the world; and the cardinal attributes of justice and mercy could only obtain manifestation through subjects fitted to receive and exhibit their working. Along with this thought there entered into the doctrine the Augustinian view of the universal corruption and sinfulness of the whole human race in consequence of the Fall. Mankind was entirely shut out, by reason of its sin and corruption, from all merit or claim upon the justice of God. As men were all self-condemned, the attribute of justice would have been displayed in its fullest form by the condemnation and eternal damnation of the whole race; and so far there could have been no ground for murmuring or complaining, nor any reason of exception against the procedure of God. But for the still more glorious manifestation of His mercy, He chose or elected from all eternity a certain number of sinful and lost men, whom for no reason or merit of theirs, but only of His mere good pleasure, He resolved to save from their state of sin and misery and restore to a state of righteousness; while the rest were left

to perish and justly ordained to everlasting punishment.

The doctrine of election and reprobation, however softened or disguised by the later modifications of heterodox and freer schools, was held in this austere and unflinching form by the early Reformed theologians. Thus Calvin, going in this beyond Augustine, does not hesitate to connect the reprobation of the unregenerate, no less than the election of the regenerate, with the absolute predestination of God; and although he admits that the former is founded upon a "horrible decree" (*decretum horribile*), he does not the less advocate it as the only consistent and intelligible explanation of the order of the world in the sphere of grace. So the doctrine issued in a final dualism, in an eternal division of the souls of men into the saved and the lost, the blest and the damned—a strict form of particularism, rigidly opposed to every form of actual universalism. In this, however, it agreed with the doctrinal position of all the other Churches, differing only in the logical severity of its exposition, and in its limitation of the eternal decree of redemption to the actual ultimate extent of the application of saving grace.

The principle of predestination resolved the whole process of salvation into the operation of

the eternal activity of the Godhead, and so every effort on the orthodox standpoint to elucidate more precisely the ultimate causality of the process had to be directed towards a deeper and clearer apprehension of the inner relations of the divine nature. Hence the attempt to resolve the mystery of divine foreordination by reference to the co-relation of the three Persons in the orthodox trinitarian dogma. This attempt was in the line of the Federal Theology, but it was never carried beyond a general application of the idea of the Covenants to the divine Persons. The conception of an eternal Covenant of Redemption, as a compact from all eternity between the three Persons of the Trinity, was at once too daring and too vaguely deducible from Scripture to receive detailed development. But it lies at the root of all the modern theories of an economic Trinity, and it gives more practical distinction to the constitution of the Trinity than can be now at least realised by purely ontological and metaphysical ideas. The Father was conceived as the source of the election of grace, and the Son as the executor or realiser of the purpose of grace in covenant with the Father, while the Spirit was represented as applying to the souls of believers the grace which was made available and effective by the Father and the Son. The elect were chosen by the

Father in the Son, but the Son did not so much purchase or procure their election by His merit and sufferings as give effect and manifestation to the electing love of the Father, which was the sole ground of all salvation. The elect, again, were conceived as predestined to form a community or fellowship which was to become visible in the Church, as the organised form and medium in and through which the Spirit would apply the grace of redemption. If this view did not receive further development it was in great part because the intellectual energy of the Church was absorbed in the polemic with its opponents and the apology for the apparent consequences of the principle, and also because the trinitarian basis of the order of salvation was more or less generally recognised.

Thus in the doctrine of election and reprobation the principle of predestination was applied to the supreme question of the salvation of the souls of men, and viewed as specially applicable to the sphere of saving grace. But the Reformed theologians were too rational and too comprehensive in their mode of thought to overlook the bearing of the principle on the other spheres of knowledge and experience. Accordingly, they universalised it from the outset, and applied it with the same logical rigour to the spheres of creation and providence, to physical nature and

moral history. They rose to the magnificent conception of the world as being brought into unity by the determining, all-pervading, all-connecting, and all-harmonising activity of the divine will. The divine purpose was ultimately one, as the finite was one; but it was not a merely abstract undifferentiated unity. It must be at least as varied, as complex, as progressive and vital, as its manifestations in and through the finite. In accordance with the diversity and plurality of the world, the divine purpose was conceived of as constituted in the divine mind by so many definite decrees. The *decrees* are the eternal grounds of the finite being and ongoings of the universe in its different stages of development, and are respectively manifested in those different stages. The world as a whole, and in all its parts and movements and changes, was thought of as existing ideally from all eternity in the divine mind; and it is what it is because it is the realisation in time of the eternal ideal. It obtains reality, or—in other words—has been created and is maintained in being, that it may manifest the glory of God by embodying and exhibiting His infinite predestinating and ordaining power and wisdom. But for His creation and maintenance of the world, God would not have attained the definiteness and externality of finite representation, nor

the multiplied reflection of Himself in finite intelligences.

The perfection of the world consists in the entire correspondence of its reality and development in time to the eternal plan or ideal which it manifests. From its first dim beginning in the first act of creation, through the various stages of its being, up to its final consummation in the redemptive consciousness of the elect, there is unbroken order and progress. The divine purpose is nowhere really thwarted or frustrated, however much the creature may seem to resist or diverge from the attainment of its end. Apparent resistances or divergences are only semblances of such to the perception of the finite intelligence, which cannot yet see all the parts in the whole, nor the whole in all the parts. If our intelligence were lifted out of its present narrowness and limitation, and could take in at one glance the mighty spectacle of the natural world and the complex drama of human history, it would behold the complete manifestation of the infinite power and wisdom of God in the finite world; and, notwithstanding the shadow of evil and the jarring notes of suffering and pain, it would be satisfied if it saw the whole crowned by the redemption of the elect and their eternal union with the infinite life of God.

Such was the broad conception of predestination held by the great theologians of the Reformed Church.

2. It has been justly claimed for the Theology of the Reformed Church that its main glory consists in its resolute and faithful adherence, in the face of keen controversies, to this cardinal Reformation principle. Its firm fidelity in this relation, and the depth and force of its apprehension of the divine predestination, may be most clearly seen from the record of the chief of these controversies.

(1) It was inevitable that the Principle of Absolute Predestination in the Reformed Theology would have to be established in early conflict with the *Romanists*. The typical instance is presented in the controversy between Calvin and Pighius, in which the latter fiercely attacked the doctrine of Calvin as inconsistent with the justice of God and the liberty and "merit" of man. The reply of Calvin was a masterpiece of dialectical skill and power. He not only defended his doctrine as expounded in his Institutes, but showed its true meaning as a vindication of the glory of God in His absolute self-sufficiency and independence of all finite conditions.

(2) No less inevitable was the conflict with

the opposite rationalistic extreme as represented by the *Socinians*. The perpetual questions and objections of the elder Socinus, which tried Calvin's patience in no small degree, culminated in the formal controversy with Castellio, who became the recognised champion of the anti-predestinarian school. The Italians, like the later representatives of intellectual enlightenment and the liberty of indifference, founded their arguments upon the contingent freedom of the will and the consequent uncertainty of all events. Hence the Socinians not only claimed a sphere of independent freedom for the finite human will, denying the divine foreordination, but even allowed to God no foreknowledge of human events, such foreknowledge being held impossible by reason of their contingency. This limitation both of the power and of the knowledge of God, was practically a denial of His infinity and absoluteness. As such, the doctrine of the Socinians seemed to Calvin to be nothing short of godless and blasphemous. No clearer demonstration of the fact that the cardinal principle of his theology was a vindication of the absolute and infinite power and wisdom of God can be found than in the hot rush of his fiery argumentation against the Socinian position.

(3) The Principle of Absolute Predestination

was held at the outset of the Reformation by Luther and Melanchthon, and was advocated by them as earnestly and forcibly as by Zwingli and Calvin. Luther's statement of the doctrine in his celebrated reply to Erasmus on the question of free-will (*De Servo Arbitrio*), is as emphatic and quite as extreme as anything ever written by any of the Reformed theologians. Melanchthon in like manner, in his earlier writings, advocated the principle of predestination with his finer learning and subtlety, even designating it as "the fundamental doctrine of Christianity." But the position thus taken up by the early Lutheran Church gradually gave way, until the *later Lutherans* let go the doctrine altogether, and even came to repudiate and fiercely denounce it in its Calvinistic form. The modification of Melanchthon's first exposition of the doctrine of grace, in his later view of the co-operation of God and man in the process of salvation—in his synergism, as it is called—was the first step away from the original purity and simplicity of the doctrine. In the later bitter opposition of the Lutheran theologians to the Melanchthonian position—reviled and repudiated as Crypto-Calvinism—as well as to Calvinism proper, the doctrine of particular grace, which was essential in the Calvinistic position, was emphatically rejected for the doctrine of universal

grace and universal atonement, which became and has since been the accepted doctrine of the Lutheran Church.

The Calvinistic theologians applied the fundamental position of their system to the controversy with all the logical rigour and consistency of Calvin himself. They could admit no purpose or will or manifestation of grace which would not be effective in realising its end in the redemption of souls. Any such grace beyond the particular grace that was applied to the elect, would in their view owe its ineffectiveness to the resistance of man. Consequently such ineffective grace would be dependent on the individual human will, and to that extent the divine purpose involved in all grace would be frustrated, and the infinite will of God subjected to a finite limitation. The Calvinists were thus led to deny that divine grace was more extensive than the divine efficiency in the actual salvation of souls; which was only another way of expressing the Principle of Absolute Predestination, or the perfect correspondence of the predestinating will of grace with the actual realisation of that grace in the salvation of man. It seemed to the Calvinists that to maintain the existence of a gracious purpose in God which was not realised in fact, was not to honour God, but to dishonour

both the power and the wisdom of His eternal purpose. In other words, it was to maintain that the world was otherwise in its final result than He had willed it to be, and this was to reflect so far upon the sufficiency of His wisdom and power. Hence the tenacity with which they clung to their principle, despite the temptation to attribute to God an apparently more philanthropic and even a seemingly more just and gracious purpose.

(4) The Principle of Absolute Predestination was maintained with the same vigour and resolution by the orthodox theology in the greatest controversy of the Reformed Church, namely, the controversy with the *Arminians*. This controversy, which arose in the beginning of the seventeenth century, was decided by what may be called the great Oecumenical Council of the Reformed Church, the Synod of Dort in 1618 and 1619. The points in dispute were reduced to five chief articles, but the fundamental principle at issue in the whole of them was really the Principle of Absolute Predestination.—Arminius, Episcopius, and their followers, from the same feeling that arose in the Lutheran Church, attempted to overcome what seemed to them the hardness and even harshness of the absolute decree of predestination, by making the election

to grace dependent in the divine mind on the foreseen faith and good works of believers. This is the doctrine of conditional election, which means, election conditioned and virtually determined by faith and conduct, and not proceeding entirely and absolutely from the divine will. Against this view the Synod of Dort declared emphatically, reasserting the Principle of Absolute Predestination as the alone determining cause of the election to grace.—The Arminians asserted also the universality of the Atonement, in the sense that Christ died for all men, although all men were not saved by His death. The Synod of Dort similarly condemned this position as inconsistent with the absolute purpose of God; for it made the death of Christ ineffective in so far as it did not work the salvation of all men, for whom on the theory it was available.—The Arminians also held the doctrine of universal grace, but at the same time maintained that faith was an act of the free choice or will of man. In this the Synod saw the same contradiction and inconsistency with the absolute will of God.—Further, the Arminians maintained that man in virtue of his free-will could finally resist the power of divine grace; and the Synod was again consistent with the fundamental doctrine in declaring divine grace to be irresistible, or as always working out

in the end the very effect for which it was designed.—Finally, the Arminians held it possible to become the subject of grace and yet to fall away from it by sin, and even ultimately to perish by losing it entirely. In opposition to this view, which was considered utterly dishonouring to the efficacy of divine grace, the Synod laid down the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, maintaining that where the grace of God had once been applied it could not be finally frustrated in its working, and the subject of it must infallibly be saved.—In all these positions, therefore, the orthodox theology only reasserted and applied the fundamental Principle of Absolute Predestination as the immovable truth of God which must be believed and maintained, in spite of all human wavering and weakness that may arise from a false apprehension of the absolute causality of grace and of the absolute wisdom of the eternal purpose.

(5) The same position was taken up by the orthodox theologians in their condemnation of the Theology of the *Saumur School*, in connection with the hypothetical universalism of Amyraldus. The real founder of the Saumur School was John Cameron, a Scotsman, who from 1622 to 1626 held the Principalship of the University of Glasgow, but afterwards went over to France

and became Professor of Theology at Saumur. The theory of hypothetical universalism was clearly and fully developed by Amyraldus, his scholar, whose name is historically representative of it. Amyraldus attempted to mediate between the orthodox Calvinistic doctrine of absolute election and reprobation and the conditional predestination and universalism of the Arminians, by affirming along with the real decree of particular election and reprobation a universal antecedent will of grace which, however, could not be realised because of the sin and unbelief of fallen men. This potential or ideal universalism was termed hypothetical because it never proceeded further than the divine idea, being arrested in its realisation by unbelief and sin on the part of man. Amyraldus held that it had been manifested in the death of Christ, which was a ransom "sufficient for all," but not really applied to all, nor even available for all, because of the decree of reprobation relative to the unregenerate. This subtle theory created much controversy in the French and Swiss Churches. It was the occasion of the last great Confession of the Reformed Church, the Swiss *Formula Consensus* of 1675; in which it was condemned, and the particularistic principle reaffirmed. The hypothetical universalism of Amyraldus was regarded as comparatively

harmless in itself, seeing it was accompanied by the orthodox twofold application of predestination, but it was also repudiated as a mere abstract hypothesis having no foundation in the real purpose and will of God.

(6) Finally, the ultimate significance of the Principle of Absolute Predestination may be illustrated by the controversy between the *supralapsarian* and the *infralapsarian* theologians, who, it should be remembered, were both considered to be within the limits of orthodoxy. The supralapsarian theory is the Calvinistic doctrine carried out in its most logical and thoroughgoing form, while the infralapsarian theory is an attempt to modify the hardness of the doctrine, so as to accommodate it to a more human view of the divine justice. According to the supralapsarian, God's original and unchangeable world-plan embraced in it from the first the Fall and all its attendant guilt and misery; so that sin, although not positively attributable to God as its author, as not being a positive product of the divine causality, but merely a negative or privative condition of the finite, was nevertheless foreordained by Him as the means by which the glory of His justice and mercy could alone be clearly manifested. The infralapsarian, on the other hand, shrinking from the representation of the character

of God that he believed to be involved in the supralapsarian view, held that the Fall and sin were indeed permitted by God, but that the decrees of election and reprobation started from a view of the Fall as an effected fact—in other words, from the contemplation of man as fallen and in the state of universal guilt and sin.

As the Arminian objections to Calvinism had been mainly directed against the hard and high view of the supralapsarians (such as Gomarus), the Synod of Dort took the infralapsarian standpoint in condemning the Arminian articles. The Westminster Confession also inclines, but with less emphasis, to the infralapsarian position, although Dr. Twisse, the Prolocutor, and other leading members of the Westminster Assembly were supralapsarians. Infralapsarianism is evidently a practical concession to the objections that have been so repeatedly and strongly urged against the supralapsarian view. But it cannot be doubted that supralapsarianism is the logical conception of the system, the only view that saves it from dualism or the appearance of dualism, and reduces the whole order of the world and human history to its ultimate unity in God. Hence all the greatest Reformed theologians have been supralapsarians, such as Zwingli, Calvin, Beza, John Knox, and Samuel Rutherford. The difference

between the supralapsarian and the infralapsarian view lies in the greater courage and thoroughness with which the former asserts the principle of predestination.

From these controversies of the Reformed Church it is manifest that the supreme interest of its theology was the vindication of the absolute and unconditional sovereign grace of God in the redemption of man. The Principle of Absolute Predestination is only another mode of expressing the principle of sovereign grace; it is the attempt to set forth in an intellectual and systematic form the belief that all realisation of the divine life in the spiritual experience of man must be referred to the eternal will of God as its ultimate and only source.

3. The Principle of Absolute Predestination acquires further definiteness and precision by an examination of the main objections which have been urged against it by critics and opponents.

(1) Let us look first at the objection to the principle, especially as expounded by Zwingli, that it is *pantheistic*, like all other forms of pantheism leaving no room for human personality. But this objection could not apply to a system which laid so much stress upon the consciousness of sin and the work of redemption. Zwingli,

it is true, represented God as everywhere active, as the cause of all being and life, and as pervading the universe by the omnipresent and omnipotent energy of His self-existence. But while representing the infinite as thus immanent in the finite, Zwingli yet held by the transcendence of the infinite personality of God, and distinguished the world from God as absolutely dependent upon Him. This view, while embodying what is true in pantheism, is nevertheless not pantheistic in the sense of the ancient systems, nor even in that of Spinoza or Hegel.

(2) The objection that the system was a form of *fatalism* was taken up and clearly refuted by Calvin. He showed that his doctrine, so far from being identical with the ancient view of an unintelligent, necessary Fate working out and determining all events, was founded upon a living faith in the personal God who foresaw and foreordained all events by His perfect intelligence and wisdom. Fatalism is, properly, the acceptance of a blind nature-force as the source of all events, and nothing could be more completely opposed to it than the acceptance of an infinite mind and will as the primary and sole cause of all things.

(3) The most pointed and popular objection was that absolute predestination implicitly made *God the author of sin.* This objection has been

repeated times innumerable since the system took shape, and it is still the first and severest word on the lips of critics and opponents. The Reformed theologians recognised the difficulty, and grappled with it seriously and earnestly. The modifications of the orthodox system known as infralapsarianism and hypothetical universalism were, as we have seen, attempts to evade the objection by separating the purpose and causality of God from the origination and perpetuation of sin. But such evasions and half-way theories were felt to be unsatisfactory by the deeper and more logical thinkers. These did not shrink from admitting that sin must be in some way referable to the eternal purpose of God, and could not, any more than any other element or fact in the universe, be excluded from His all-comprehending being and all-originating power. The supralapsarians would hardly have controverted even the bold question of Hegel when he asks, "What sort of Absolute Being could that be which did not include in it ultimately the reason of evil, as of everything else in the universe?" Accordingly, we find them setting forth the ultimate principle of the system in various lights, in order to remove from it the stigma of the objection. Zwingli, for example, alleges that sin could only be the act or state of a finite and subordinate being in its

violation of a law laid down by the infinite and supreme Being, who could not be Himself subject to the law thus imposed. In other words, sin might eventuate in the experience of a subject of the law, but it would not on that account be attributable to the Lawgiver, who was above the law and the consequences of its non-fulfilment. A more positive view of the relation was given by Calvin and supralapsarians like Samuel Rutherford. They affirmed that God had included sin in His eternal purpose as a means for the higher manifestation of His glory; but for sin, that glory would not have been exhibited and realised in its highest form of redemption. Moreover, sin by its very nature was not a positive entity created by a special outgoing of the divine energy, but merely a negative or rather a privative thing, a failing to attain to a certain mode or form of being which, however, was yet to be realised, under the condition of sin, by the outgoing of a higher divine energy. All that God did was to bring into being the conditions of the finite experience of sin. Every system short of an eternal Manichæan dualism, must admit so much.

It may be thought that this explanation was inadequate. It was admitted to be such by the strongest supralapsarians themselves. They did not presume to explain the ultimate mystery of

the divine nature in the eternal decree; but they argued that all other explanations were still more inadequate, and were altogether to be rejected in so far as they seemed to set up a being or activity in any measure independent of, or in any way outside of the absolute and eternal being and activity of God. Even the world of evil was held to be continually maintained by Him, and to be absolutely dependent upon His will. If it did not lie outside of His active and constant maintenance and government, neither had it lain outside of His eternal purpose and decree.

(4) Another strong and oft-recurring objection was that the Principle of Absolute Predestination left *no room for personal human freedom.* This allegation has also been the subject of careful consideration and explanation on the part of the orthodox theologians. Some have attempted to evade it by declaring the problem insoluble, be the stand taken on the absolute determination of God or on the free-will of man; but, generally, they have faced the difficulty boldly. They have clearly seen that everything depends on what is really meant by human liberty, and they have at least exploded some of the ambiguities of their opponents and exposed not a few of their fallacies. From Calvin to Edwards, and from Edwards to Chalmers and Schleiermacher and Schweizer and

Scholten, they have all repudiated the popular notion that the liberty of the will consists in entire freedom from determination. It is the very nature of the will to be determined, and a will determined neither one way nor another, neither by a good motive nor by a bad motive, would be no will at all. Utter indeterminism could be conceived only as the state of an infantile will. The liberty of indifference is therefore rejected by the Reformed theologians as a mere abstraction having no basis in experience. The liberty of the will, they hold, consists in its freedom to act in accordance with its own determinations and independently of external compulsion or co-action; and their view has been corroborated by the whole tendency of modern science. But such freedom they maintain to be quite consistent with the divine foreordination, as it is quite consistent with the divine foreknowledge which all parties to the controversy, except the Socinians, admit.

The apology of the predestinarians is more convincing when it rises out of the sphere of psychology into the clearer distinctions of the divine administrations. Thus they asserted that the objection under review did not distinguish between predestination relative to the sphere of physical nature and predestination relative to the

spheres of providence and grace. God does not predestinate in the moral and spiritual worlds as He predestinates with reference to the movements of a stone or stock in the natural world; for predestination bears upon each case according to its intrinsic nature and quality. So far as predestination is concerned, there is no reason why the will should not be free if it be so constituted by nature. This becomes plainer when the distinction is kept in view between the natural and the renewed will in the state of grace. In the latter case the divine activity manifests itself with its most direct energy in renewing the will and imparting to it a higher power of activity, which is at the same time also its highest state of liberty. Where the divine predestination is realised with the clearest and truest consciousness in the individual, there also is the clearest and truest consciousness of freedom. All the argumentations of the later theological determinists, such as Edwards and Cunningham, are only elaborations of this general position in detail. The position may be put thus, that whatever liberty man possesses is not the result of his self-determination, but comes solely from the eternal purpose of God and its immanent effectuation or realisation in the experience of grace.

With these, and other[1] objections to the Principle of Absolute Predestination, the Reformed theologians dealt thus profoundly and logically; so that the principle remained unaffected in itself and in its essential relations by all the controversy and discussion that arose regarding it. It must, however, be admitted that by reason of the limitations of the principle, its exposition and application are encumbered with difficulties. These limitations can only be removed by the development of the principle in harmony with contemporary thought and experience.

II. We come then to the consideration of the Principle of Absolute Predestination in the light of the new conditions of our time.

As in the case of the principles previously reviewed, so here also the conservative and liberal extremes prevail around us. On the one hand, we have a tenacious clinging to the external dogmatic form of the principle that will admit no

[1] Dr. Hastie intended to discuss here other three objections to the Principle of Absolute Predestination, namely, that it leads to neglect of the means of salvation and to religious despair, that it represents God as partial and unjust in His dealings with men, and that it is inconsistent with the free offer of salvation in Christ.—Ed.

legitimacy in any effort to modify or develop it, and prides itself on a mere verbal repetition of the old technical formalism. On the other hand, we have as the most general characteristic of the theological thought of our time, the predominance of a cultured, vague, anti-dogmatic liberalism, which has really turned away from all the strongholds of the old predestinarian dogmatism, and satisfies itself with a few general religious maxims, essentially Arminian or Pelagian or even Socinian in their origin and character. Any attempts among us to deal in a scientific and progressive way with the substantial content of the dogmatic principle are at the best but tentative and hesitating, and are generally feeble and superficial in their results.

In these circumstances, it is encouraging to recall the more scientific treatment of the subject in the Continental branches of the Reformed Church. After a long period of indifference to dogma, following the bitterness and odium of the polemic in the Lutheran Church against the Reformed Theology, Schleiermacher in 1817, when at the zenith of his fame as Court Preacher and Professor of Theology in Berlin, startled and roused his theological contemporaries by his remarkable essay on the Doctrine of Election, written as a critique of an easygoing latitudinarian

exposition of the subject by Bretschneider. In this essay Schleiermacher showed how deeply he was possessed by the profound spirit of the Reformed Theology, and how truly he was a revived Calvin in the midst of a lukewarm generation. Schleiermacher's work was carried on by the distinguished theologians of the Continental Reformed Churches to whose views reference has already been made—Schweizer, Schneckenburger, Heppe, and Scholten. By them the Principle of Absolute Predestination has again been restored, in varying ways, to its dominant position in the theological system; and it has even received new development at their hands.

1. The first general thought that arises is that the Principle of Absolute Predestination is the synthesis, or union and completion of the principles we have last discussed, namely, the Theological Principle and the Principle of Religious Development. It combines into one the ideas of the absolute sovereignty of God, and the actual development of the finite world in nature and history and the religious life of man. The development of the finite world is explained as the realisation of the divine eternal purpose; and God's relation to the development is made intelligible by viewing it as grounded solely in His pre-

destinating wisdom and will. The Principle of Absolute Predestination, in thus relating God in His creative causality as absolutely anterior and superior to the world, is the unbroken chain which links all things to the absolute and infinite Deity.

> And so the whole round earth is every way
> Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.

This linking of the divine purpose in eternity to the development of the finite world in time is the essential idea of absolute predestination; but its exposition in the old theology, while wonderfully profound and comprehensive, was yet imperfect and incomplete because of the limitation of the relation, both on the side of God and on the side of the world.

On the side of God, the divine decree was so represented that it appeared as if existing complete in itself in a time before cosmic time; so that the eternal purpose in its relation to the world was, as it were, set back entirely into a period before the creation, and the created world was represented as passing through a subsequent development by itself in which the decree had no active inward function or part. This gave rise to a mechanical separation of the divine purpose from its actual realisation, as if they were two entirely distinct things belonging to entirely separate

worlds and entirely different ranges of time. Such a view of the relation of the eternal decree to the temporal reality was virtually deistic—separating eternity from time, God from the world, God's ideal purpose from its embodied reality, and ultimately issuing in a permanent and insuperable dualism. In this respect the old dogmatic exposition of the principle requires correction. God, eternity, and the divine purpose are not to be entirely carried back in thought to a time before the succession of time, but are to be conceived as in living, present, and active relation, always and everywhere, to the finite order and actual development of the world.

Again, the imperfection and limitation of the old dogmatic exposition are equally evident when its principle is viewed from the side of the world. The predestinated world is not to be conceived as passing through a mechanically evolving process of self-development, subsequent to and apart from the divine decree of a far past eternity, but rather as having no existence, no power of movement, and no capability of development, without and apart from the divine decree of which it is the very accompaniment and realisation. The actual being of the world we live in—its continued movement, its regulated order, its growing fulness of life, and its constant advance towards a higher

consummation through its myriad activities and forms and species and individuals—is only conceivable as the result and product of the actual immanence and energising of the eternal purpose or decree of God Himself. Here then we have the two elements which make the world and its development at once real and intelligible: the omnipresent, omnipotent, all-creating, all-sustaining, all-governing, all-perfecting, yet unchangeable, transcendent, supreme God; and the finite, dependent, ever-moving, ever-changing, ever-developing world, advancing more and more in its evolution to the full and complete manifestation in all space and all time of the one eternal world-plan of God.

It must also be evident that the terms which express the relation between God and the world are necessarily inadequate and imperfect, being derived from reflection on human relations and, in consequence, more or less anthropomorphic. The terms, predestination, foreordination, purpose, and decree, all more or less suggest finite limitations and imperfections. When we apply them to the perfect activities and operations of the divine nature, we must divest them as much as possible in our thought of these limitations and imperfections.

All the great Reformed theologians strove to

give expression to the Principle of Absolute Predestination in a manner as far as possible in conformity with their highest knowledge of God Himself. The divine purpose and the predestinating decrees are defined by them as the essential, immanent, manifold and ceaseless activity of the infinite and eternal Spirit in His relations to the finite creation. His purpose is not a mere accident or contingency of the divine nature, nor a mere ideal world—in the sense of Plato—inactively present in it, nor a mere transient act by which the effect becomes separated from its cause; it is an all-embracing tendency to effect, in the course of time, what can and shall serve for the revelation of His glory. The eternal purpose in itself is one, continuous, universal, and all-comprehending; only in respect of its manifestation in the world is it manifold, diverse, and particular. Nor are the particular decrees of God arbitrary, contingent, and variable acts of will, like human decrees; they are the perfectly free and absolute determinations of the divine will with reference to the whole created universe and its development in time. They embrace all reality from its lowest to its highest forms, and all the conditions of everything that happens in the world, and are consequently the first and last causes of all things. The difficulty

of conceiving the relation between the unity of the eternal purpose in God and the innumerable decrees through which that purpose is manifested in the real world, has been felt to be a radical difficulty. One of the Reformed theologians aptly illustrates the conception by comparing the universe to an infinite sphere having the universal, immutable divine purpose for its centre, and the divine decrees radiating through it to every part, infinitely divergent, yet definitely constitutive.

2. With this general idea of absolute predestination before us, let us now attempt to develop the principle in a more concrete and practical way, by following the divine decrees through the several spheres of their operation and manifestation in the finite world. These spheres are recognised as those of the natural world, the moral world, and the spiritual world—in other words, creation, providence, and redemption. In relation to the salvation of man, those three spheres are evidently identical with the three stages or economies of the Covenant of Grace. These we discussed in the preceding chapter; and now we need only regard them from the standpoint of predestination as determined, carried on, and consummated by the divine purpose working through them and bringing them to ultimate unity in the final reali-

sation of the divine destination and ordination of the world.

It has, indeed, been alleged by even so well-informed an historian as Dr. Schaff, that the Principle of Absolute Predestination and the doctrine of the Covenants belong to entirely different and independent modes of theological thinking; but a deeper insight will not fail to find their correspondence, and even coincidence in the scheme of salvation. It is only when we see that the Covenant of Grace is determined in its order, movement, and consummation by the absolute divine purpose, and is coextensive with the whole constitution and development of the world in its relation to the religious nature and history of man, that we recognise its essential, necessary, and universal character.

(1) First, let us consider God's working in the *natural world.* It must be admitted that this primary sphere of the realisation of the eternal decrees was not brought into prominence by the early Reformed theologians in their exposition of the doctrine of grace. Yet it was clearly recognised by them to be a sphere of the divine manifestation, although not always distinguished from the order of God's work of grace in the providence of history. Its comparatively slight treatment is perhaps mainly due to the fact that they

did not possess that deep interest in the natural world which has been since produced by the progress of science and the rise of scientific speculation. Yet undoubtedly in its relation to the religious development of mankind the natural world was in their view the object or medium of the first stage of the Covenant of Grace, in the Religion of Nature before the Law; and, as such, it was the proper sphere of universal or common grace in its most unconditional manifestation.

In these days of absorbing scientific study, when nature's mysteries of wonder and power are being unfolded in a merely secular form, we require more than ever to go back upon this old view of nature as the first sphere of the manifestation of God's grace. Most certainly are we all entirely dependent for physical life upon the working and bounty of God; and the quickening again of the sense for His actual presence and activity and goodness to us-ward in His vast store-house of nature, is a primary necessity of our religious life, if it is to be roused out of its forgetfulness of the living God and brought again into harmonious relation with all the wonderful way of His grace. This is the true natural theology for our time—the science of God in nature and in the natural life of man; and as the old theologians

saw, it is entirely a theology of grace in its first rudiments and beginnings.

The eternal decrees of the divine purpose, which are the foundations of all grace, have their clearest and most direct embodiment in the forms and products and ongoings of the inorganic and organic worlds, from the first film of nebular mist in the ether of space up to the production and organisation of man, the microcosm, the epitome and crown of all the lower creation. All recent scientific theory and speculation, rightly interpreted, only tend to give greater emphasis and clearness to the fact of the working of absolute predestination and universal grace in the finite creation. The idea of the purposive or teleological nature of every atom and combination in it, is receiving new confirmation and illustration; and the ultimate particles of matter are even held to be discernible as "manufactured articles." Newton's law of gravitation has reduced the government of the whole physical universe to a mathematical unity. The nebular theory of Kant and Laplace represents the formation of the star-worlds and our solar system as a regulated progress from an undifferentiated diffused chaos to the differentiation of perfect order and relation. The chemical laws of atomic weight and combination have carried the principle of design into all

the inter-relations of matter, according to fundamental decrees regulating every material element in the universe. The various theories of the origin of life all agree at least in eliminating chance and emphasising the elevation of the created world to a higher stage of being. The theories of the origin of species are so many attempts to conform the variation and perpetuation of life to the ultimate laws of order and progress already developed in the material system. The Darwinian theory of natural selection corresponds, in the physical sphere, to the Reformed doctrine of election in the sphere of redemption; the natural struggle for existence resulting in the survival of the fittest, is a sort of half-blind materialistic Calvinism.

There is, after all, but one word which can shed full light on the mysteries of nature; it is, God's eternal purpose, the living realisation of His eternal decrees by His own present activity in the ongoings of His physical world. The philosophical teleology of to-day, which finds an eternal idea embodied in every organic form of life as the secret of the unity of all its parts and of their maintenance in the whole, is but an approximation to the deeper and more direct religious truth of the immanent decrees of God. The whole sphere of nature thus becomes not only a bright mani-

festation of the glory of God, but a universal medium for the conveyance of His natural, common grace to the souls of all men, young and old, rich and poor, high and low together, when their hearts have been opened to recognise it as such. Every breath of life we draw, every sight and sound of the outer world, all its beauty and order and power, its changing seasons and its rolling years, all that is in it, all that it displays, and all that it gives, are the gracious outgoing to man, according to His eternal decrees in nature, of the sovereign love of the Father in heaven, who makes the sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends the rain on the just and on the unjust. In our blindness and dulness and insensibility we almost wholly fail to recognise this. That the Reformed theologians recognised it, might be shown by a hundred quotations.

It will be enough to cite Zwingli, the first and the least exhausted of them all in this connection. "There is nothing," he says, "which lies outside of the sphere of the divine providence. Every power is either uncreated, and then it is God; or created, and then it is through Him, and so a power of God, since there is nothing that is not of Him, through Him, and in Him. A power is said to be created because His universal power appears in a new subject or in a new form, as is taught by

Moses, Paul, Plato, and Seneca. There is therefore only one original being and essence, only one principle of all things, and only one cause of all appearances and changes. Everything proceeds from God into being, and subsists and lives and works through God's power. All creatures as well as man are of divine nature, although in a different degree of nobleness and proclaiming God's glory in a different measure and degree." Even Calvin, with all his care and caution, declares that the pious may say that "nature is God," although the expression is to be guarded so that the order of nature prescribed by God shall not be identified with God Himself. This is not pantheism, nor fatalism, nor materialism, nor mere evolutionism; it is the true theism of the Reformed Church—what we have called panentheism, or the view that all things live and move and have their being in God, existing only as predestined and ordained vehicles and manifestations of the glory of His eternal purpose of grace and love.

(2) In the second place, what holds of the realm of nature as the medium and bearer of universal natural grace, holds still more evidently of the *moral world* as manifesting the providence of God through the whole range of history, and embracing the second economy or dispensation of the Covenant of Grace.

It was long thought that the domain of history was governed only by accident and chance, and that no universal order could be discerned in its apparent chaos and caprice. But the new science or philosophy of history is reducing all seeming disorder and confusion in the development of the individual and of society to an order as regular and as rational as that which physical science has demonstrated in the sphere of nature. The moral work of mankind, on the least as well as on the greatest scale, in the weakest individual as well as in the mightiest empire, and from the first dawn of human life till the present hour, has been as truly subject to the government of God as the kingdom of nature has ever been. It is the divine government alone, in its constant and irresistible operation, which has made and makes history a realm of regular order and progress; so that even the most appalling and perplexing elements and incidents of history—its crimes, its wars, its oppressions, its lusts, its carnage and slaughter and death, and all the multitudinous forms of the wrongdoing and wrath of man—have been made to manifest and magnify the glory of God, and even to praise Him. Indeed in the special providence of history we have far more visibly presented to us than in the natural world the execution of the eternal decrees of God, and the evidence of

the perpetual determination of all events by the divine predestination. Modern philosophical reflection regarding the order, laws, and ends of history (as exhibited, for example, by Professor Flint in his learned work on the Philosophy of History in Europe) is all coming from the various points of view—critical, positivist, empirical, and speculative—to recognise the immanence of a higher determining power and purpose in the history of the world.

This is no new speculation or discovery. It is the ancient faith of the Hebrew prophets, awakened in them by a higher wisdom as they contemplated God's dealings with the fates of their own people; and it was uttered forth by the evangelical prophet for all time, in its analogy with physical law: "As the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations."

The old Reformed theologians saw clearly that the origination of the moral world of man as a higher sphere than the physical sphere of nature, its maintenance in history amid all the clash and conflict of material things and of human wills, its regulation by laws and its government by invisible power, the direction of the fates of

nations and empires and their universal subserviency to a higher end—in a word, the whole being and movement and progress of the historical world were alone explicable by the creating causality and constantly determining providence of God, which is but an expression in other terms for His eternal predestination and the execution of His decrees in time.

(3) Finally, the universal order of the divine predestination and grace in nature and the particular order of the divine predestination and grace in history, are crowned by the special and individual predestination and grace in *redemption.* Redemption, according to the principles of the Reformed Theology, is the consummating work of God. Advancing directly from His activity in the two lower spheres where it was anticipated and prepared for, it brings the full manifestation of His glory to its final conscious realisation in the souls of men. The apparent interruptions of the work of providence and grace by the appearance and prevalence of sin and death, are only apparent; for sin and death were from the first embraced in His universal purpose, and serve only to set forth more clearly the glory of His grace. The work of redemption is the final revelation of the mystery of the one universal purpose of God, which, rudimentally embodied in

the primary order of the natural world and dimly exhibited in the providential ruling of the moral world, is at last revealed and unfolded, in the consciousness of human salvation, as the final consummation of the world in the kingdom of grace. For now, where sin abounds, grace does much more abound; and the execution of the eternal purpose or decree of redemption by Christ Jesus, completes the universal sovereignty of the divine grace. In the Christian redemption the highest and most special meaning of predestination finds its sphere and application.

When the decree of predestination unto eternal life is viewed as the crown and consummation of the execution of all God's other decrees in the works of creation and providence, as arising out of them and carrying them forward to their ultimate end, and superseding them in the eternal glory of redemption as the flower and fruit supersede the root and stalk, we begin to understand better the fundamental significance of the principle. It is now clearly seen to be absolute in the strictest sense, being grounded only in the eternal nature of God, and necessarily unconditioned by any foreseen faith or works or merit in the creature, which could have no existence at all except as the product and effect of its working. For, all that the creature can ever attain to in this

relation, must be derived from the divine working of free grace in nature, providence, and redemption. And so in very truth:

> Merit lives from man to man;
> But not from man, O Lord, to Thee.

The anthropological expression of the Principle of Absolute Predestination is, therefore, the absolute dependence of man on the determining grace of God in all that pertains to his salvation. God is absolutely independent of man, both in ordaining the means for and in ultimately realising His decree of predestination. The decree is immutable and irrevocable, and the grace which effects it can be neither resisted nor thwarted, but must infallibly reach its predestined and perfect end. This is the basis of the absolute assurance and certainty of eternal life, which, according to the Reformed Theology, is not grounded on the merits of Christ, the elected medium and instrument through whom it is communicated, but rather on the eternal decree whose sole cause is the good pleasure and eternal will of God. The principle of predestination unto life, when thus developed through the predestination of the natural and moral worlds, obtains new strength and vitality and universality.

3. But the chief difficulty in carrying out the

scientific development of the predestinarian principle arises in connection with the doctrine of *election and reprobation*, which was the most special and practical application of the principle made by the Reformed theologians. Here we stand before the great burden of the system—its more or less overt assertion of an eternal decree of reprobation or preterition, realised in the condemnation of the impenitent to the horror of eternal punishment. It is not too much to say, that the main effort and tendency of the recent progressive Theology of the Reformed Church have been to modify and develop this doctrine in accordance with the universal teleology of the system, and so to give greater definiteness and expansion to the Reformed eschatology, or doctrine of the consummation of all things in the future life.

It cannot be denied that all the old dogmatic expositions of the system involved the twofold eternal division of mankind into the saved and the lost, the penitent and the reprobate, in accordance with corresponding eternal decrees of God. Zwingli, indeed, showed a larger and more generous apprehension of the predestinating principle than any of his contemporaries; for he held that all infants and the noblest of the heathen would be saved by the working within them of the free and gracious Spirit of God. But Calvin developed

the principle with all his logical rigour. He was himself oppressed by its last consequence, yet maintained the justice of God in the decree of reprobation. In the seventeenth century many attempts were made in the Reformed Church to mitigate the severity of the doctrine of reprobation, yet these issued only in illogical or enfeebled theories that either made man so far independent of God, or made God's decree to a certain extent dependent upon the will of man. In fact, all the theologies of the sixteenth century—those of the Roman and the Lutheran as well as that of the Reformed Church — made the process of the world and the consummation of human history end in a final dualism and an eternal endless hell. The Synod of Dort and the Westminster Confession, therefore, only formulated in a more thoroughgoing and definite way the universal belief still held regarding the issues of the present dispensation of things in the future life.

It is remarkable, however, that three most important early national creeds confined themselves to formulating the doctrine of election alone as the application of the divine predestination, passing over in silence the doctrine of eternal reprobation. These three creeds are, the Heidelberg Catechism, the revised Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, and the original

Confession of the Scottish Church, John Knox's Confession of 1560. This silence on the part of theologians who were familiar with all sides and applications of the doctrine, may be regarded as significant of their view that their Churches did not necessarily hold, nor require their members to profess the dogma of eternal reprobation.

It has been well observed by Scholten and others that the dogma of election and reprobation in the form in which it is embodied in the old systems, was the necessary outcome of the view of the world then prevailing, but is not to be identified with the principle of predestination itself, which is larger and more fundamental than this dogmatic rendering of it. Hence the marked and earnest effort of all the later leaders of the Reformed Theology since Schleiermacher to develop the doctrine into fuller accord with the fundamental principle, by resolving its dualism and particularism into the universal and comprehensive form of the principle itself.

None of the theories now prevalent in the popular schools of theology can entirely satisfy the severe moral spirit of the Reformed Theology, or attains to the comprehensiveness of its fundamental conception of the world of God. The Principle of Absolute Predestination repudiates every theory of conditional immortality that does not derive

the force of eternal life from the absolute grace of God alone, such as the ingenious and plausible theories of Rothe and others of his school; and, in consequence, it also repudiates every theory of annihilation of the individual soul, whether by an absolute fiat of God or by the gradual self-destruction of the impenitent sinner. It rejects, too, the common universalism, in so far as it is grounded on a mere feeling of benevolence and issues in a simple identity or sameness of condition in the future world.

But, at the same time, in view of the enlarging evidence of the unity of the divine purpose and its progressive realisation in all its spheres, the principle can rest no longer in the old traditional dualism and particularism, with the final termination of the whole process of the world in an eternal hell, whose tortured denizens are for ever separated from God and heaven. The ideal of the Reformed eschatology is an endless progression in the future life under conditions modified by the results of the present development, and carrying that development forward under new conditions of divine determination. Although a decree of eternal reprobation seems incompatible with the universal Principle of Absolute Predestination in God as the absolutely good, yet a relative election and preterition in time,

with even an ultimate differencing of the spiritual lives of all the individuals of mankind, is not inconsistent with it. The failures and defects of the present development of the individual may assert themselves in a retardation of his development in eternity, and in a continued sense of imperfection and incompleteness. In all its cycles and æons the development may still retain more or less of the elements of struggle and pain. Neither the idea of a mere general restoration nor that of a universal forgiveness satisfies the deeper principle of the Reformed system, which demands the absolute maintenance of the law of righteousness, and a finally complete differentiation of all the possible stages and degrees of the spiritual life. The Reformed Theology has not yet fully solved this profoundest problem of all, but it is passing in this connection through a new period of vital development. And the issue shall be a deepened belief in the endless development of all created souls till the absolute purpose of God shall be realised in an infinitely diversified spirit-world, reconciled, perfected, and unified in eternal harmony through spiritual communion with Christ around the throne of God.

This word of eternal hope seems to me the latest message of the Reformed Theology, and with it I conclude. May the God of all grace,

who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, and in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, realise His purpose within us, and guide us more and more by His Spirit into the blessedness of His own eternal truth and life.

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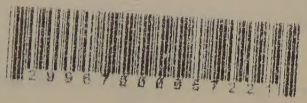

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